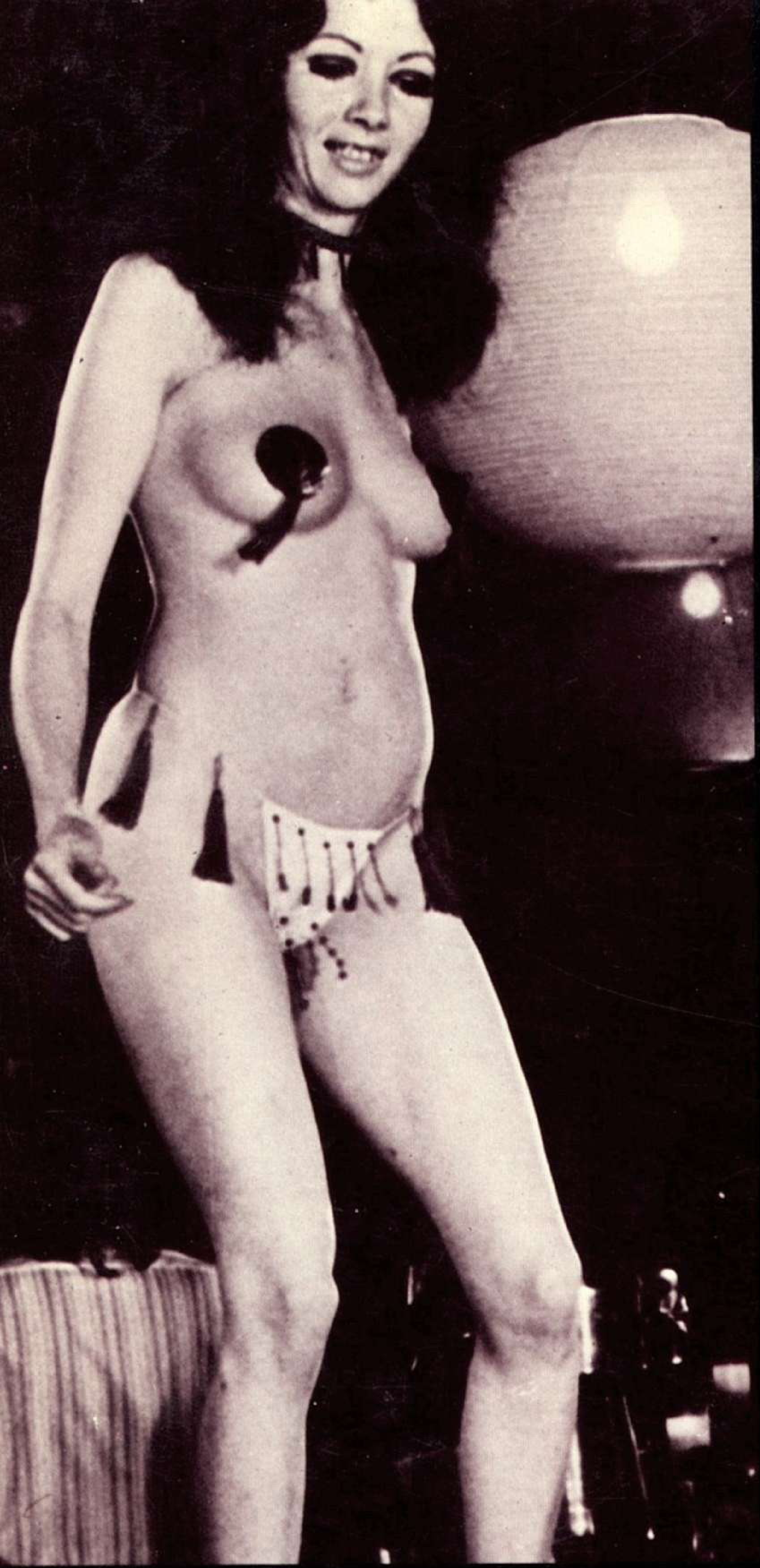


THE AMAZING

# Herschell

AND HIS WORLD OF

# Gordon

EXPLOITATION FILMS

# Lewis

SPECIAL LIMITED EDITION!

By
Daniel Krogh
with John
McCarty

FOREWORD BY HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS

# THE AMAZING Herschell Gordon Lewis AND HIS WORLD OF EXPLOITATION FILMS

By
Daniel Krogh
with John
McCarty

**FOREWORD BY HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS**

# The Amazing Herschell Gordon Lewis

## AND HIS WORLD OF EXPLOITATION FILMS

by
Daniel Krogh
with
John McCarty

All rights reserved
© Copyright 1983 by Daniel Krogh and John McCarty

***The Amazing Herschell Gordon Lewis***
***And His World of Exploitation Films***

Library of Congress Catalog Number: 83-80262
ISBN: 0-038782-03-7

*Published by*
FantaCo Enterprises Inc.
21 Central Avenue
Albany, New York 12210

*Typography and Cover Design:*
Unicomp

*Book Design:*
Scott Smerznak and Julie Johnson

Printed in the United States of America

First Printing:
September 1983

*For my Mother and Father*

*without whom this book*
*would never have been written*

*And also for Herschell*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**FOREWORD** . . . . . . . . . . VIII
by Herschell Gordon Lewis

**INTRODUCTION** . . . . . . . . . . XII
by John McCarty

**CHAPTER ONE** . . . . . . . . . . 2
Herschell Gordon Lewis brings Hollywood back to Chicago . . . almost. *The Prime Time.*

**CHAPTER TWO** . . . . . . . . . . 6
The early nudies. *Living Venus; Lucky Pierre; Daughter of the Sun; Nature's Playmates; BOIN-N-G!; Goldilocks and the Three Bares; Bell, Bare and Beautiful; Scum of the Earth.*

**CHAPTER THREE** . . . . . . . . . . 12
The genesis of gore. *Blood Feast.*

**CHAPTER FOUR** . . . . . . . . . . 18
The gore goes on. *2000 Maniacs, Color Me Blood Red.*

**CHAPTER FIVE** . . . . . . . . . . 26
"Just a plain old country boy." *Moonshine Mountain.*

**CHAPTER SIX** . . . . . . . . . . 30
Mixed bag. *Monster A Go-Go; Sin, Suffer, and Repent; An Eye for an Eye; Jimmy, the Boy Wonder; The Magic Land of Mother Goose; Alley Tramp; Something Weird.*

**CHAPTER SEVEN** . . . . . . . . . . 38
Sex and sin in suburbia, show biz and the computer age. *Suburban Roulette; The Girl, the Body and the Pill; Blast-Off Girls; How to Make a Doll.*

**CHAPTER EIGHT** . . . . . . . . . . 52
Gore again, the second wave. *A Taste of Blood, The Gruesome Twosome.*

**CHAPTER NINE** . . . . . . . . . . 62
Back to back and bigtime. *She-Devils on Wheels, Just for the Hell of It.*

**CHAPTER TEN** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 74
Herschell, Me, and the Vanity Press. *The Psychic, a.k.a. Copenhagen's Psychic Loves.*

**CHAPTER ELEVEN** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 80
Butchery live on stage—the saga of the Blood Shed Theatre.

**CHAPTER TWELVE** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 86
Herschell shoots a nudie western. *Linda and Abilene.*

**CHAPTER THIRTEEN** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 92
The later nudies. *The Ecstasies of Women, Miss Nymphet's Zap-In, Black Love.*

**CHAPTER FOURTEEN** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 94
Herschell shoots his last two gore pictures. *The Wizard of Gore, The Gore-Gore Girls.*

**CHAPTER FIFTEEN** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 110
Return of the plain old country boy. *This Stuff'll Kill Ya!, Year of the Yahoo!*

**CHAPTER SIXTEEN** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 126
Herschell Gordon Lewis today.

**COLOR SECTION** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 129
A gallery of gore from the amazing HGL, in blood-curdling color!

**AFTERWORD** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 138
Lewis on Lewis: A conversation with the amazing HGL.

**FILMOGRAPHY** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 144

**APPENDIX I** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 156
Availability of Lewis' films today.

**APPENDIX II** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 160
Selected Song Lyrics. *Moonshine Mountain, Love That White Lightnin', The Pill, Robert E. Lee Broke His Musket On His Knee.*

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 165

**BIOGRAPHIES** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 166

1 **The Amazing HGL as he appears in *A Taste of Blood* (1967).**

1

# FOREWORD

1

***Blood Feast* is an accident of history. We didn't deliberately set out to establish a new *genre* of motion pictures; rather, we were escaping from an old one.**

Dave Friedman and I were something of an Odd Couple in film production. Our backgrounds, attitudes toward the industry, and lifestyles differed dramatically. Yet, we got along well, with mutual respect and even occasional admiration.

Our reputation as a producing team—if you could call it that—for being able to generate more film-per-dollar than any other source had put us in the unusual position of being "hired" to shoot low-budget features when we had none of our own to make. For example, we already had made a couple of harmless nudie films for Tom Dowd, the amiable gentleman-exhibitor who in a few years would sell his Capri Theatre Building in Chicago for an outlandish amount of money and move to Florida.

When someone asked me about our budgets, I'd answer mysteriously, "Under $400,000." Dave was more forthright, and sometimes he'd tell the amount, to the penny. If the listener was an exhibitor or distributor who had some idea of the grosses or how much film rental he himself had paid to show one of our films, he'd think, "How long has this been going on?" and begin plotting his own invasion of the exploitation film field.

So we spawned a number of our own competitors. We were the Johnny Appleseeds of the business. But not many could match our budgets because except for laboratory work, we were totally self-contained.

Self contained! Even though the cinematography credit often was given to someone else, I was usually on the camera, trying to hold it steady while I directed the picture. Dave would run the sound. Who else could beat the budgetary device we had used on *Lucky Pierre*, of having so small a crew there was no one to hold the clapstick, so sometimes the actors had to shout out their own slates, discard the clapstick and then start acting. After *Lucky Pierre*, we didn't do this anymore, but I still was on the camera and Dave still ran the sound recorder.

Dave and I differed about owning equipment. I liked the independence of not having to go to a rental source; he wanted no part of it. So, as we made films, I gradually gathered to the bosom of my rickety Volkswagen van assorted flotsam and jetsam of production equipment. The most important were the mighty Mitchell camera with its enormous cast-iron blimp, the heavy two-case Ampex synchronous sound recorder, and a surprisingly new three-headed Moviola editing

1 **The Amazing Herschell Gordon Lewis.**
2 ***Blood Feast* (1963).**
3 ***A Taste of Blood* (1967).**

2

3

machine.

With these, plus the ancient Cineflex hand-held camera, several miles of thick cable, and a thin complement of lights, we could produce *anything* in 35mm at a time when most of our announced competitors were shooting 16mm. We rented little from any outside source; usually the production would rent my equipment, on ridiculously favorable terms, and the Volkswagen van would totter out on another perilous journey to Miami, where except for one or two films I made in Chicago, I shot everything until late 1967, when we moved to the more labor-favorable Los Angeles area.

In early 1963 the winds were blowing cold in Chicago, and Dave and I were wondering what we might shoot. The Chicago weather was a wonderful creative force: it got cold; we went to Florida to shoot a picture, any picture.

I had become increasingly disenchanted with the way the exploitation film business was going. There were only so many ways to show girls in a nature camp playing volleyball.

Visualize the film industry of 1963. It wasn't then as it is now. The independent low-budget production could get playing time only if the subject were one the major companies couldn't or wouldn't touch. Independent producers showed uncovered breasts and towel-covered lower fronts because they felt secure: these were the films enough theatres would show to make a profit.

I told Dave I didn't want to make any more nudies. I felt that our picture *B-O-I-N-N-G!* was the best one yet made and that with our resources we weren't going to beat it. I also told him I could see the grosses dropping.

We sat down to figure out what else might suit us. What other subjects fit that narrow strait—films the major companies couldn't or wouldn't make?

We started a list. Right after "Goona-Goona" (South Sea island with touches beyond major company films) we put down, tentatively, the stark single word—**Gore.**

The entire list had about ten possible subjects. None excited us, but it was February and the snow had turned to dirty ice.

"Gore looks good," I said to Dave. "No one has ever shown people dying with their eyes open."

"What else?"

"What else? Let's really rip 'em up—show some gristle. Show not just a trickle, but gouts of blood."

"*Gouts* of blood?"

"Gouts. Look it up."

He did.

That very week, the phone rang. Leroy Griffith, who did and does oper-

4 **The Egyptian goddess Ishtar from *Blood Feast* (1963).**

4

ate theatres around Miami (one of his current houses is "The Pussycat" in Miami), had entered a partnership with Eli Something, a Cincinnati exhibitor who was married to a burlesque star named Virginia Bell. Leroy and Eli wanted us to shoot a film for them starring Virginia Bell.

"But you have to shoot it right away," said Leroy. "Virginia is pregnant."

Virginia Bell was known for her 48-inch bust. We rushed to Miami to shoot the film subsequently known as *Bell, Bare, and Beautiful.* On the way down, I had an idea: why not make our own picture back-to-back with Leroy's and Eli's? Our crew would be assembled on location, we'd have the equipment on hand, and our own production cost would go down.

At that moment, we agreed to try it. We had neither script nor, for that matter, an idea.

*Bell, Bare and Beautiful* went like chocolate. We had mastered the technique of location shooting, including hooking our lights directly to the power box of someone's home without blowing out the air conditioner or shrinking the television picture. While we were shooting it, we were planning our own film.

We settled on gore, as I had known we would.

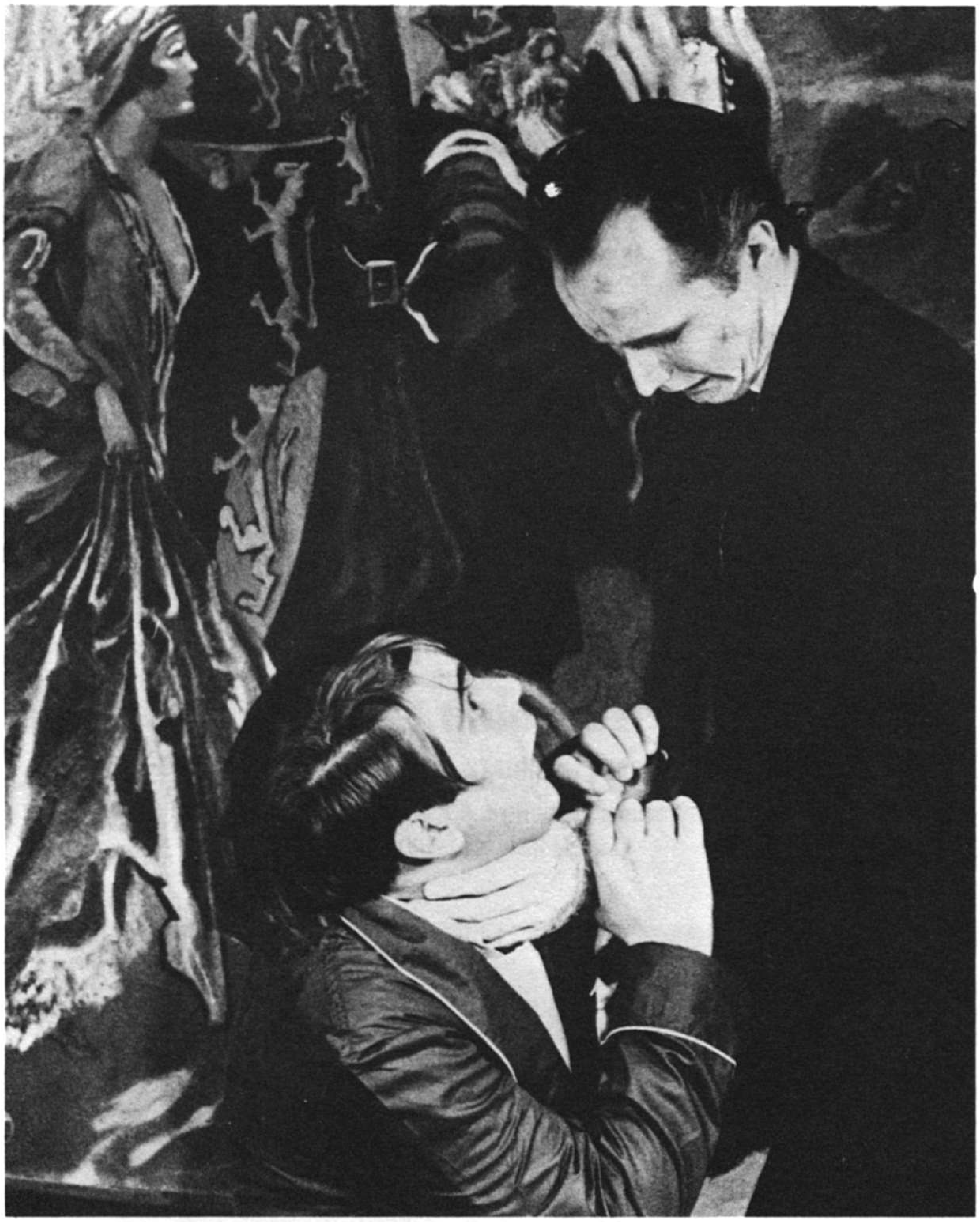
Scripting never held any terrors for me. As we sometimes did, we credited one of the crew with the script, but the actual production script was little more than a 14-page outline.

With our usual contempt for the finer points of production, we used as our cast the same people we had used in Leroy's film. Our principal concern wasn't acting talent but effects; and here, I felt, logic was on our side. If someone wanted to see fine acting, he could go to a theatre showing Jose Ferrer in *Cyrano de Bergerac* or Marlon Brando in *On the Waterfront.* I gave the film the title *Blood Feast* and knew some newspapers would reject that title (the word "blood" was controversial in those antediluvian times; one major metropolitan newspaper even turned down the title *In Cold Blood*), but that for theatres it would be a new world.

More important than plot or cast was blood. After buying a container of stage blood for an earlier film, *Living Venus,* I knew the standard product was too purple for us. *Living Venus* was black & white, so the color of the blood made little difference; but I could see the industry changing, and our disgusting little transitional picture *Scum of the Earth* would be the last black & white film I ever made—except for the footage I shot to flesh out *Monster A-Go-Go,* a film I completed but didn't produce.

We went to a cosmetics laboratory

5



5 ***A Taste of Blood*** **(1967).**

in Coral Gables, and together with the massed brainpower at Barfred Laboratories we came up with stage blood which as far as I know the laboratory is selling today, regrettably and perhaps unfairly with no royalties to us.

The base of our stage blood was kaopectate, but we never told the actors that. We simply told them it was edible. Until Axion came along there was no way to get all of it out of clothing, but since that might also apply to hair we didn't tell the actors that either.

Mal Arnold, who played Fuad Ramses in *Blood Feast,* had been in *Bell, Bare, and Beautiful* in a role 180 degrees different. So had Bill Kerwin, who used the name Thomas Wood. So had the fellow who played the professor (an oldtime theatre book pitchman crony of Dave's and Leroy's) and several of the girls who were demolished as the film progressed.

I knew as we were cutting *Blood Feast* that we had an extraordinary exploitation film on our hands. We'd ask people to look at a rough-cut on the Moviola. Here was a beat-up print, covered with grease-pencil marks and patched with tape, together with a half-finished sound track. Even though we were laughing and joking as we ran the footage, people would turn green, avert their heads, say, "Yucch!" or actually scream.

I've always been a frustrated musician. In my younger days, I was an usher at Orchestra Hall in Chicago. As we were putting *Blood Feast* together, I came to a monumental decision: I'd write the musical score myself.

I knew exactly what the instrumentation would be—a cello, a trombone, and a piano. These would, I knew, give me the weird sound I wanted, plus the budgetary benefit of requiring only a handful of musicians.

Never, before or since, did I labor as I did over that musical score. The cello had to be in the tenor clef, and I'd put down a note only to wonder whether it was a half a tone off. Larry Wellington, that wonderful and underestimated genius who had worked with me on the music of every film since *Lucky Pierre,* hired some musicians. At the last moment, I decided to add kettledrums. I went to Frank's Drum Shop, rented two kettledrums of appropriate size, and played them myself.

Only in mid-1982 have I had an opportunity to look at *Blood Feast* again. Jimmy Maslon, the young West Coast entrepreneur who somehow got the rights to the picture, sent me a videotape. I'm still proud of that musical score.

The production company that made *Blood Feast* had four partners—Stanford Kohlberg, who owned theatres in Chicago and who ultimately was the defendant in lawsuits filed by the other partners; Sidney Reich, from Rochester, New York, an accountant who had become president of a company named Bernz-O-Matic, which made blowtorches and paints, and who was Kohlberg's partner on several other ventures; Dave Friedman; and I.

We opened *Blood Feast* in Kohlberg's drive-in theatre in Peoria, feeling that if we dropped dead in Peoria no one would know. The film opened on a Friday. Saturday we couldn't stand it any longer, and we drove down to Peoria. Even though there was a major fair in town, theatre traffic was backed up so far the state police were directing it. We were still about a quarter-mile from the theatre when I turned to Dave and held out my hand. "I guess we've started something," I said.

**Herschell Gordon Lewis**
*Fort Lauderdale, Florida*
*November, 1982*

# INTRODUCTION

**At the close of the forties when the major Hollywood studios were forced by law to release their monopolistic hold on motion picture exhibition by selling off their theatre circuits, the nation's movie screens suddenly became fair game.**

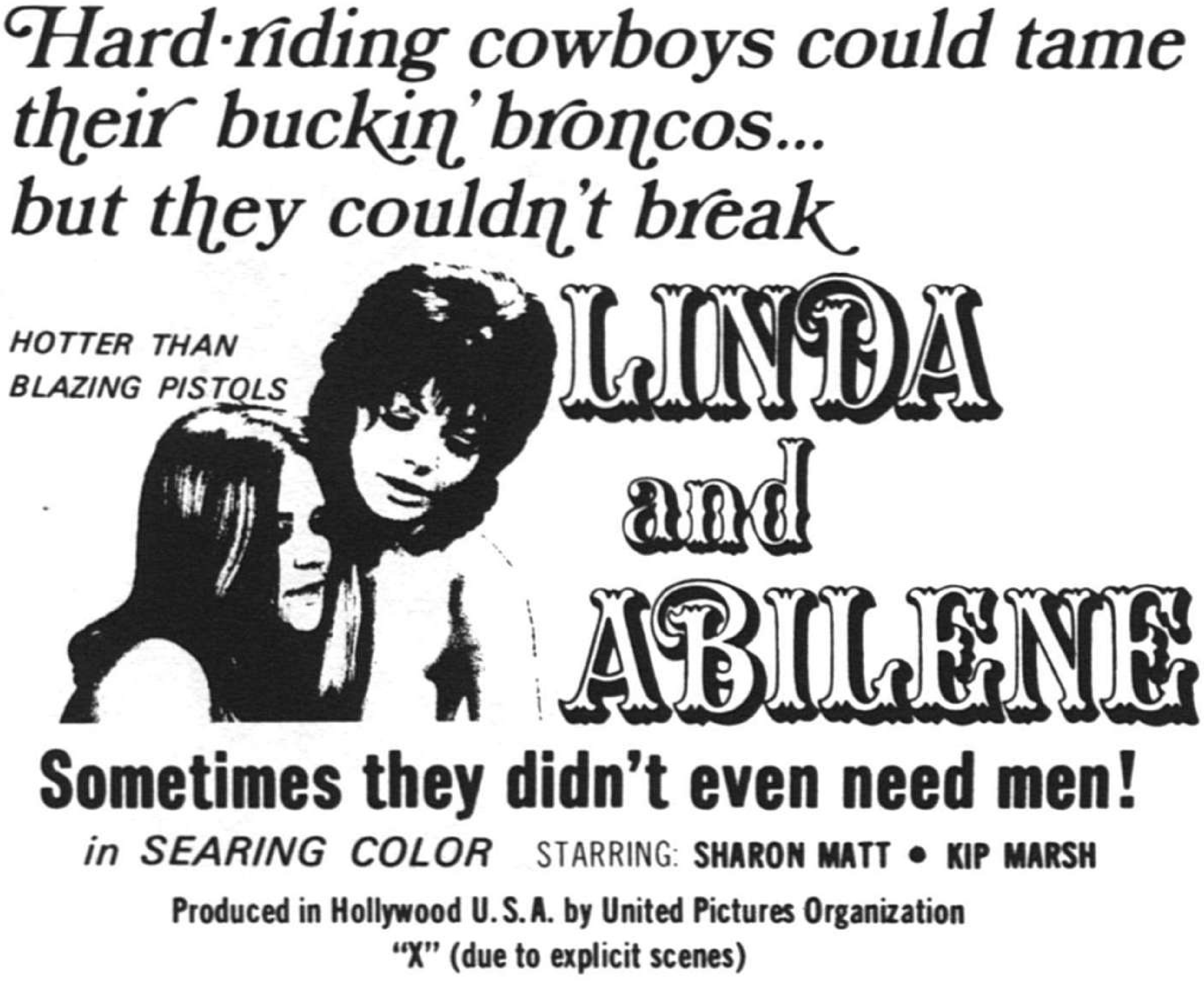
The new breed of exhibitor continued to prefer Hollywood product, of course, but the growing popularity of a new medium—*free* television—was rapidly causing the number of films being produced by Hollywood each year to dwindle. By the mid-fifties, the infant medium had killed off the staple Hollywood B movie and had rung the death toll for the traditional double feature as well. Very soon there just weren't enough films to go around, to fill the nation's movie screens on a regular basis, and so a new breed of movie mogul stepped in to plug the gap: the exploitation filmmaker.

Working on budgets that amounted to pocket change compared with the huge amounts tossed around by the major studios, and yet competing for the same customer's hard earned buck, the exploitation filmmaker had to be before anything else a shrewd marketeer. To be successful, he had to be able to smell a trend well before its aroma reached the rarified air of Hollywood. Then he had to be able to exploit that trend quickly, shooting his films and rushing them into distribution with almost lightning speed. No one did this with more acumen than Herschell Gordon Lewis.

In his roughly ten-year career as a working filmmaker, Lewis ground out 37 feature films, none of which failed to return a profit. That's quite an accomplishment. But it wasn't his only one.

Lewis had an almost uncanny ability to spot a trend and exploit it before anyone else did. While Hollywood and even many of his own compatriots in the exploitation film arena continued to turn out one monster movie after another to capitalize on the American teenager's apparently insatiable appetite for such fare, Lewis clearly envisioned the death of that genre as well as its next evolutionary step. And so he started making *gore* films. This was in 1963, almost twenty years before the major Hollywood studios would take the same route with *Friday the 13th* (1980) and its like. Lewis made his first nudie in 35mm before Russ Meyer did and even turned out a series of Southern "good ole boy" action melodramas in the Burt Reynolds mold before the name Burt Reynolds had successfully lit up its first marquee.

Rivaling the energies of some of filmdom's more well known auteurs, Lewis not only wrote, produced and directed many of his films, but photographed and scored them as well—then went on to devise their advertising campaigns and sell them on a state-by-state basis to exhibitors. And on top of his filmmaking activities—which, unbelievably, he handled on the side!—Lewis even managed



*Hard·riding cowboys could tame their buckin' broncos... but they couldn't break*

HOTTER THAN BLAZING PISTOLS

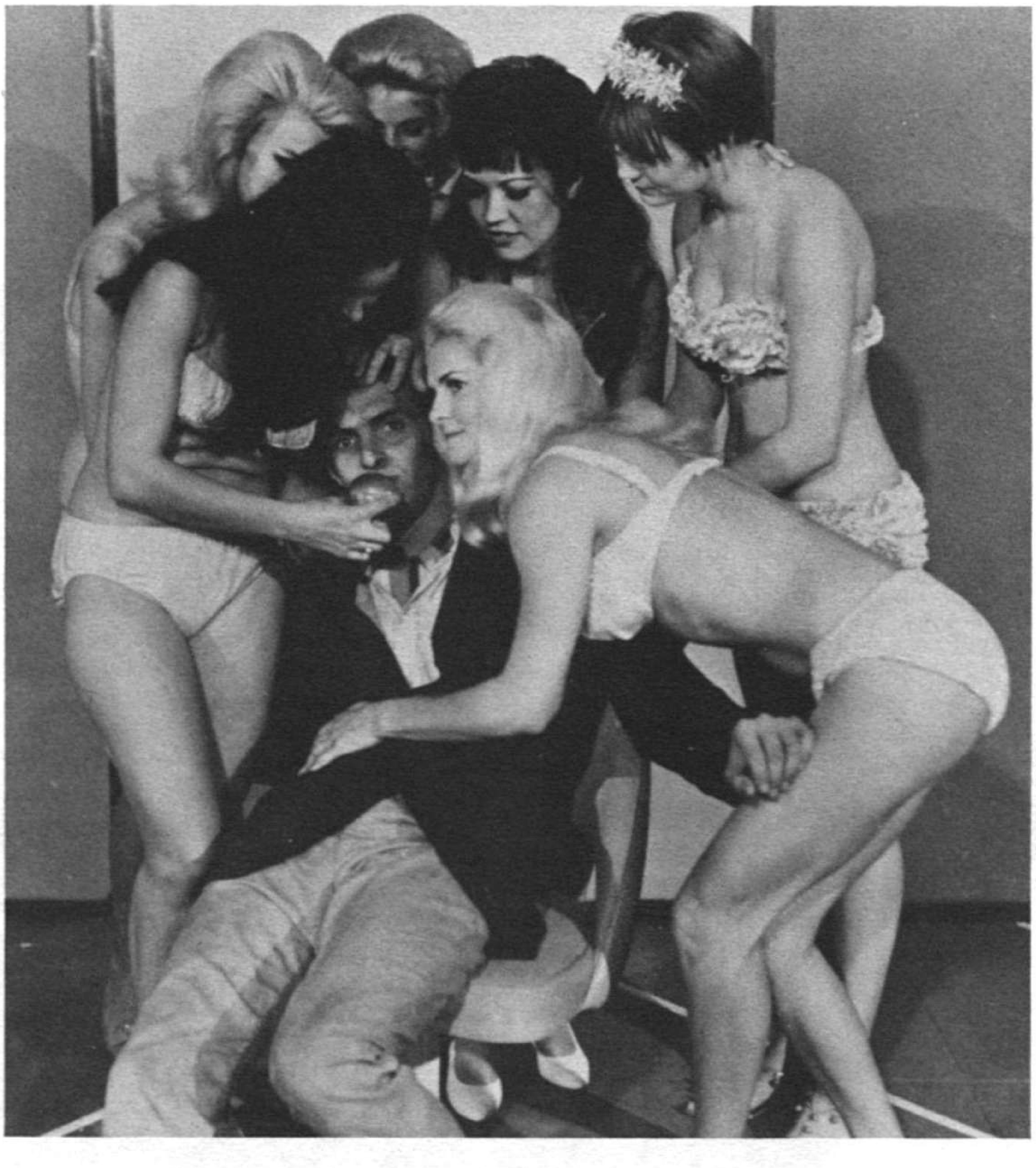
LINDA and ABILENE

**Sometimes they didn't even need men!**

*in SEARING COLOR* STARRING: **SHARON MATT • KIP MARSH**

**Produced in Hollywood U.S.A. by United Pictures Organization**
**"X" (due to explicit scenes)**

1



1 ***How To Make A Doll*** **(1968).**

to build a fledgling Chicago ad agency into one that ultimately billed a million dollars in a single year. And by the way: he also raised a family . . . in his spare time.

As a result of his efforts, Herschell Gordon Lewis succeeded in becoming the first significant—and influential—filmmaking force based in Chicago that the Windy City had seen since the silent film era. While his films are seldom seen today—a fact which may change overnight now that the videocassette has been invented—Lewis himself has achieved folk hero status. Gore fans continue to hunt for his films as if they were buried treasure. And aspiring filmmakers look upon him as a pioneer influence in the regional filmmaking concept, a man who could teach them a trick or two about how to get their own films off the ground. If only he would.

Well, in the following behind-the-scenes account of how Lewis did it all, these aspiring filmmakers finally get their wish. In it, Dan Krogh has appropriately avoided viewing Lewis' body of work with the eye of a critic. I say "appropriately" because this is not intended to be a book of criticism. It is, if anything, a "How To" book—and occasionally a "How *Not* To" one as well—which takes the reader on a journey into a seldom explored region, the frequently manic and just as frequently hilarious world of exploitation filmmaking. A world where there is never enough time and seldom enough money to get the job done, let alone done with polish. Lewis—and this he was always most proud of—*always* managed to get the job done.

So, welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to the world of exploitation filmmaking as faithfully described by a man who was there, Dan Krogh, who will now introduce you to the star of our show, the amazing Herschell Gordon Lewis. Prodigious filmmaker. Folk hero. Pioneer.

And an astute and remarkable businessman as well.

John M·Carty

**John McCarty**
*September, 1983*

# CHAPTER ONE

# Herschell brings Hollywood back to Chicago ...almost

**Born June 15, 1926 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—home of contemporary horror movie kingpin George (*Night of the Living Dead*) Romero—Herschell Gordon Lewis first appeared on the theatrical feature film scene in 1960 at the age of 34.**

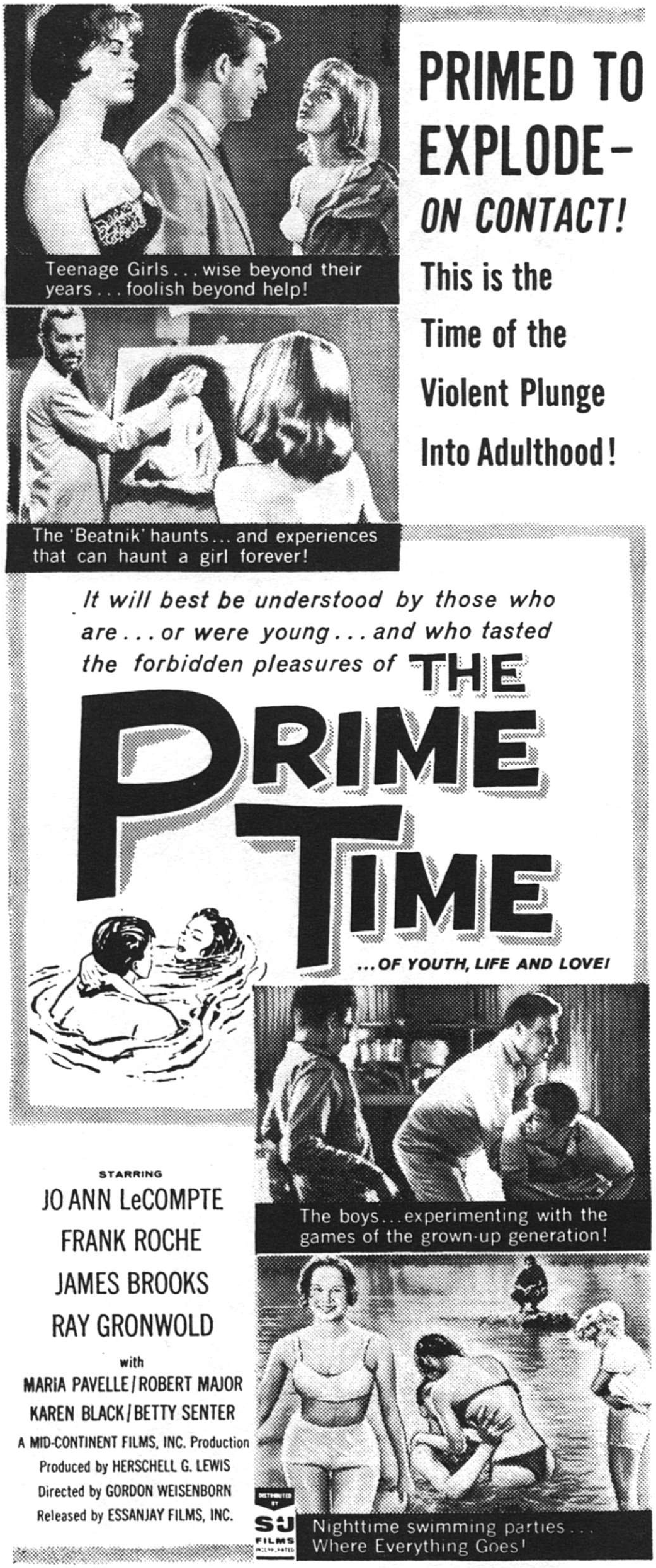
He brought with him a background that included: a B.A. and M.A. degree from Northwestern University, a Ph.D. from Midwestern University, a couple of hypnotism diplomas, a stint teaching English at the University of Mississippi, a keen knowledge of marketing and advertising, and practical experience in the commercial/industrial field of the film business. He applied all of this background as producer of *The Prime Time*, the first theatrical feature film to be made in Chicago for forty years. Professional films starring Charles Chaplin, Gloria Swanson, and Wallace Beery had been made in Chicago by the Essanay Company prior to 1920, but thereafter such activity had dried up. Filmmakers had abandoned New York and Chicago for the sunnier climes of a place called Hollywood.

*The Prime Time*, a story of "flaming youth," was produced by Mid-Continent Films, a company partnered by Lewis and David F. Friedman. Friedman is listed in the film's credits as "Production Supervisor in Charge of Advertising, Publicity, and Exploitation." The film was directed by Gordon Weisenborn and released by Irwin Joseph's Essanjay (in homage to *Essanay*, perhaps?) Films. The screenplay was written by Robert Abel, who was identified in a contemporary *Variety* newspaper article about the production as being ". . . ex-20th-Fox."

The plot of *The Prime Time* concerns the machinations of a rebellious teenager, Jean Norton, as she tries to trap an older man, a police detective named McKeen who has a taste for minors, into marriage. In the process, she spurns the affections of Tony, a teenage boy who loves her, and puts her life in danger at the hands of the villain of the piece—a crazed beatnik artist called The Beard.

Along the way, the audience is treated to fist fights, exploitative shots of The Beard's undraped models, a catfight between two of the models, and a provocative midnight swim scene that takes place in a quarry. But all turns out well at the final fade-out: The Beard is killed, our heroine blackmails McKeen into marriage, and poor Tony finds romance with Gloria, the proverbial girl-next-door who has loved him all along. Morality triumphs.

The previously mentioned *Variety* article (of September 23, 1959) states that *The Prime Time*, which had only recently completed shooting, was brought in on an 18-day schedule ". . . for considerably under its declared $200,000 budget." Thus illustrating a major dictum of the Lewis Method: stay on schedule and under budget at all times. The article also mentions Lewis' penchant for real locations, whether interior or exterior, as opposed



**PRIMED TO EXPLODE—**
***ON CONTACT!***
**This is the Time of the Violent Plunge Into Adulthood!**

Teenage Girls . . . wise beyond their years . . . foolish beyond help!

The 'Beatnik' haunts . . . and experiences that can haunt a girl forever!

*It will best be understood by those who are . . . or were young . . . and who tasted the forbidden pleasures of* **THE PRIME TIME**

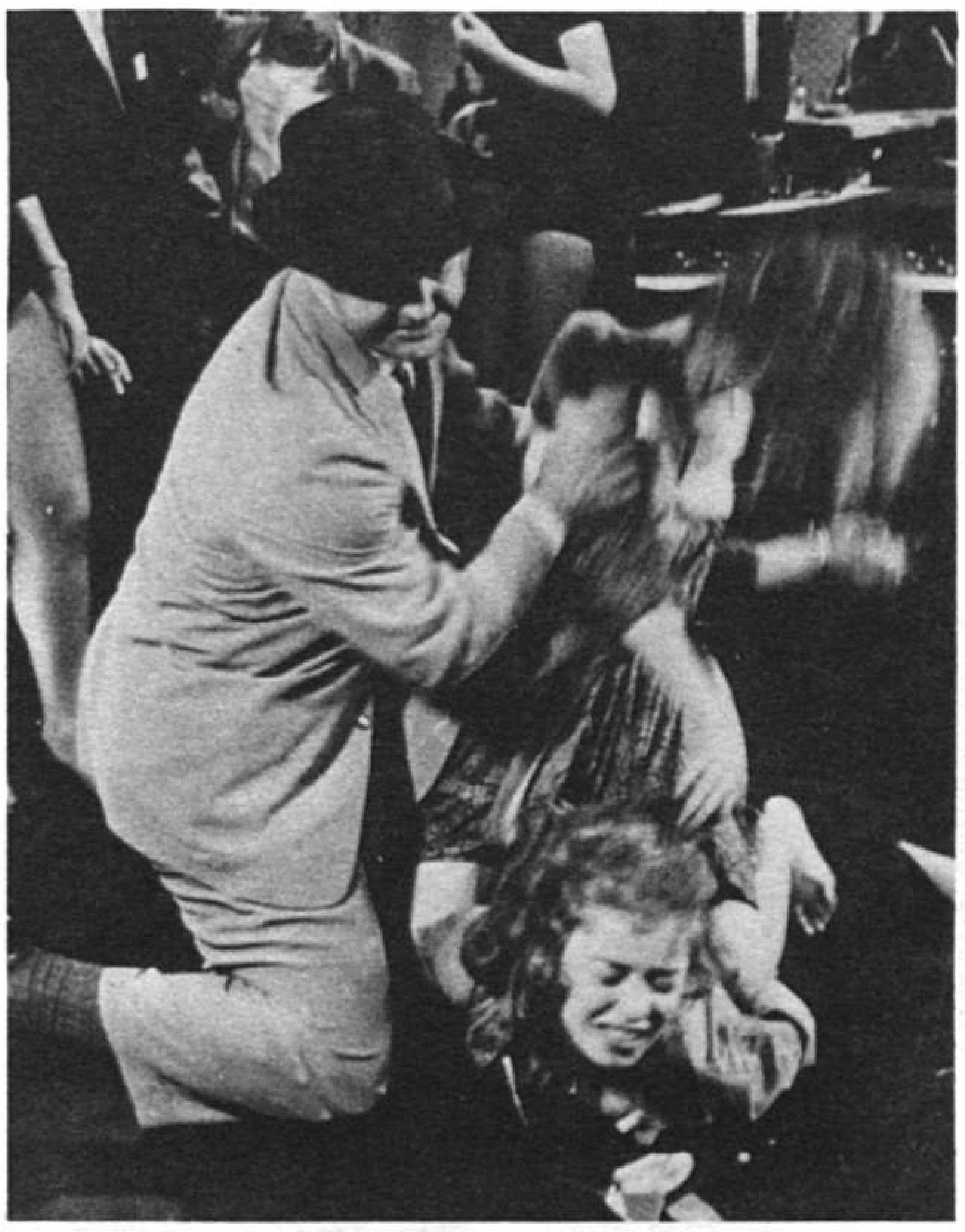
*. . . OF YOUTH, LIFE AND LOVE!*

The boys . . . experimenting with the games of the grown-up generation!

Nighttime swimming parties . . . Where Everything Goes!

STARRING
JO ANN LeCOMPTE
FRANK ROCHE
JAMES BROOKS
RAY GRONWOLD
with
MARIA PAVELLE / ROBERT MAJOR
KAREN BLACK / BETTY SENTER
A MID-CONTINENT FILMS, INC. Production
Produced by HERSCHELL G. LEWIS
Directed by GORDON WEISENBORN
Released by ESSANJAY FILMS, INC.

1 **Detective McKeen (Frank Roche) breaks up a catfight between a pair of girls at a local teen hang out.**



1

to costly artificial sets. Lewis' belief in exploitation and tie-ins is also underscored by the article's mention of plans for the release of a novelization of the film as well as a soundtrack record containing some of the film's more prominent (and exploitable) tunes like *Teenage Tiger* and, or course, the title song, *The Prime Time*.

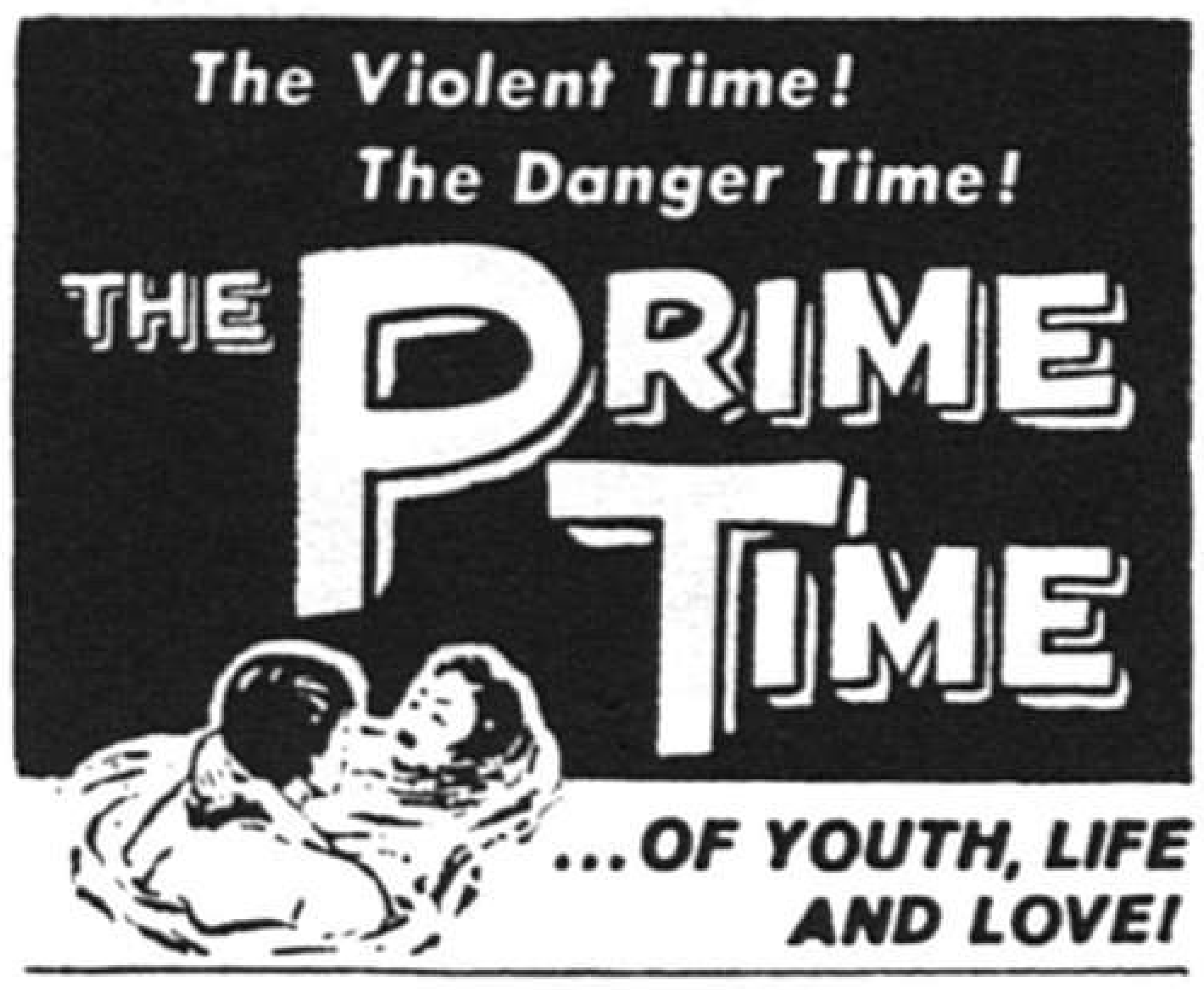
Lewis' belief in exploitation—that advertising and promotion are at least as important as the film itself, if not moreso—is echoed in his "Showmen's Campaign Manual" (or pressbook) for the film. Along with a plethora of available newspaper ads promising ". . . Rebels Without a Cause! Teenage Girls . . . Wise Beyond Their Years, Foolish Beyond Help!" and "Nighttime Swimming Parties . . . Where Everything Goes" there is a prepared newspaper article which declares that ". . . there are no leather jackets, ducktail haircuts, blue jeans, toreador-pants or ponytails in this motion picture." The

2 **A teenage model poses for The Beard . . . adding a little spice to the film.**

3 **Police detective McKeen interrogates The Beard, whose past crimes are well known . . . you can see them hanging on the wall behind.**

4 **Jean plays the tease to crazed beatnik artist, The Beard (Ray Gronwold), an action she will come to regret.**

2

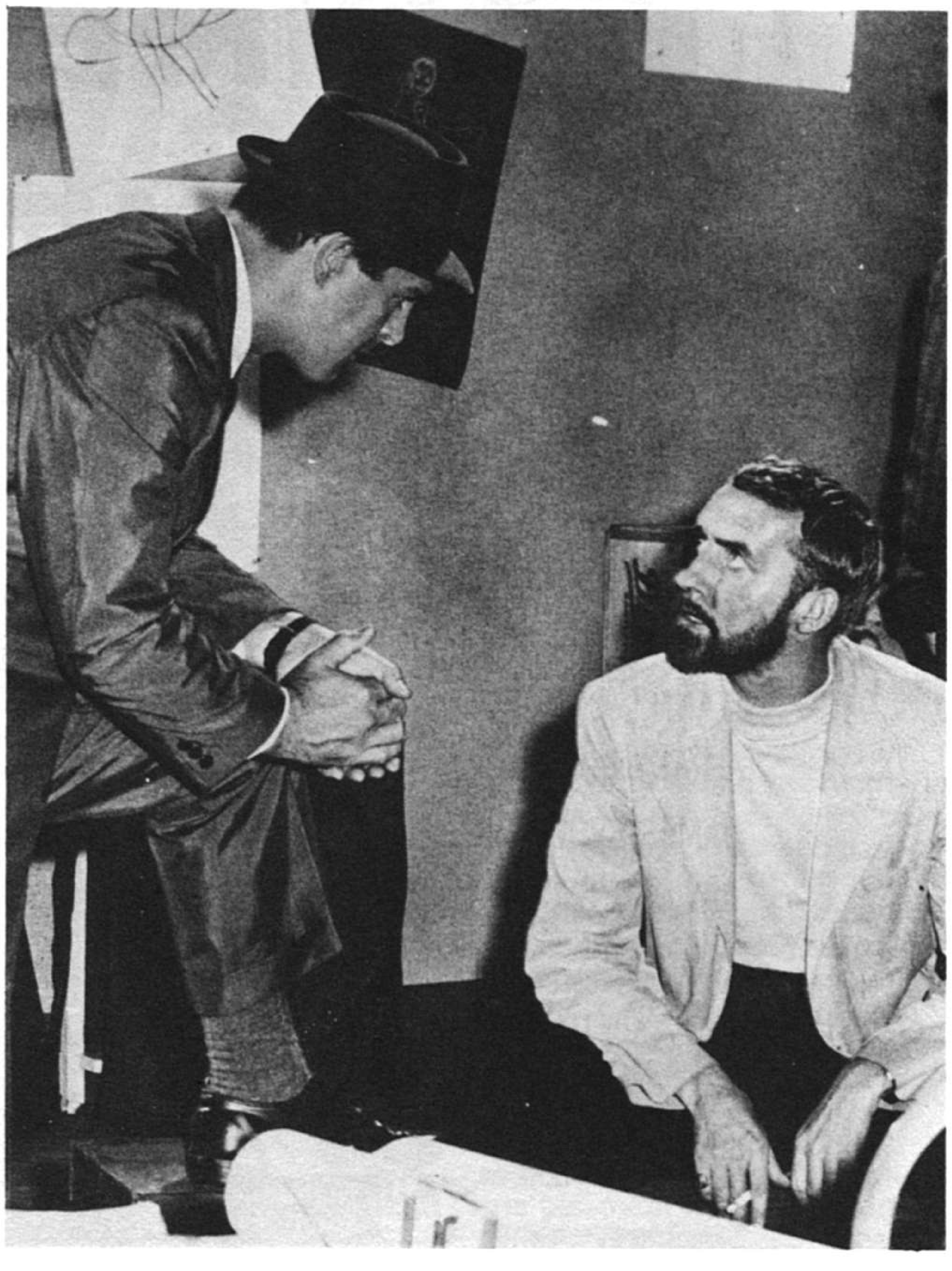

The Violent Time!
The Danger Time!
THE PRIME TIME
...OF YOUTH, LIFE AND LOVE!

idea was to play both sides of the street: attract the kids, but don't turn off their parents.

Also included in the kit are thirteen different radio commercials, a pre-recorded intermission tape, a recording of songs from the film, and, of course, a "Coming Attractions Trailer." Suggested exploitation gimmicks included: conducting a "Beard Contest;" holding a "Prime Time of Your Life" write-in contest (in 20 words or less); and suggested tie-ins with the artistic character of The Beard. And finally there is a "Street Stencil," an item to be used, literally, for plastering the name of the picture all over town. As you can see, Lewis was nothing if not thorough in designing ingenious methods for exploiting his film.

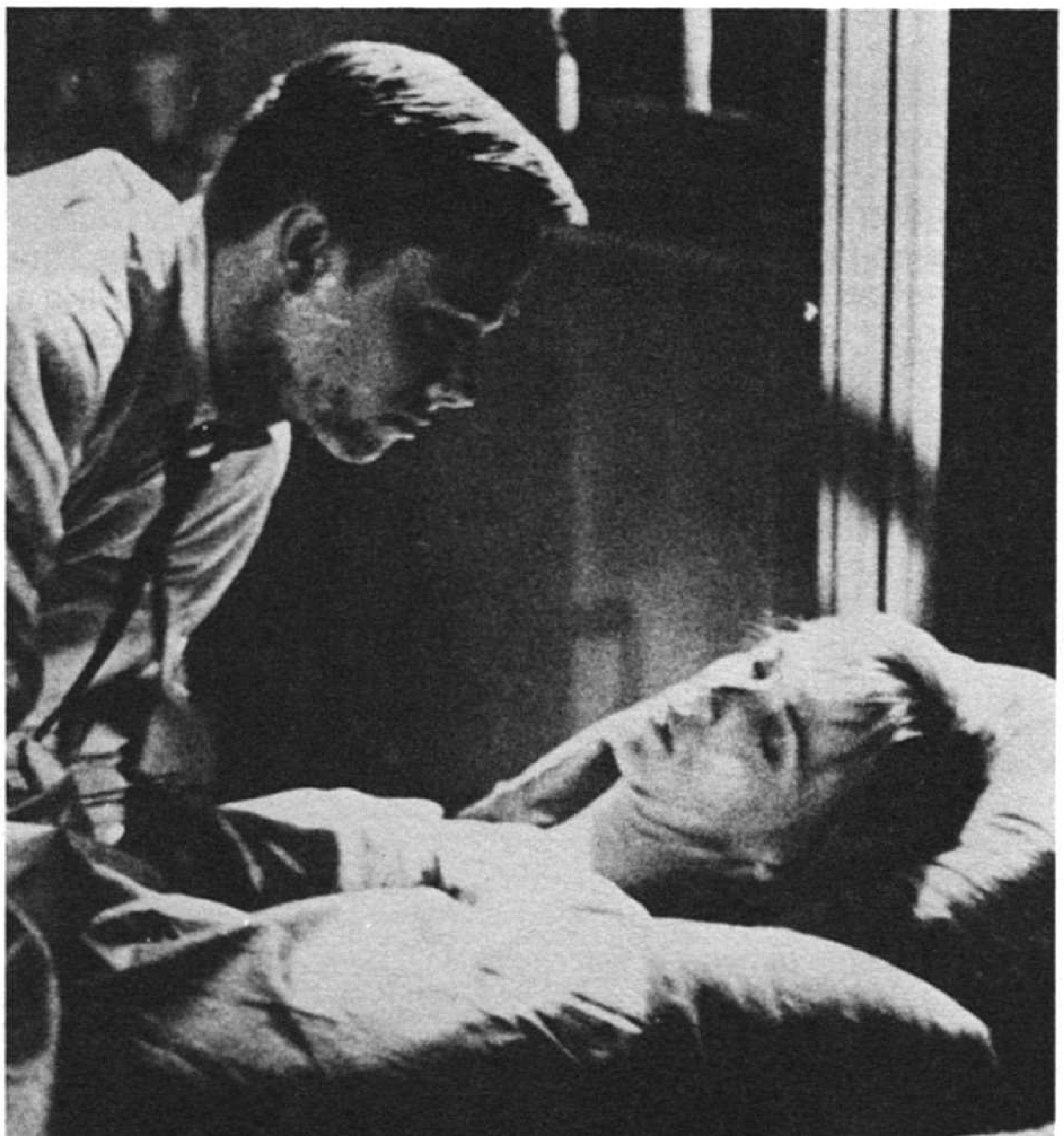
Still, *The Prime Time* was not a great success. One of the reasons for this was that it was double-billed with a lackluster Anne Baxter vehicle called *The Carnival Story*. With the exception of

3



4

5



5 **Tony saves Jean in the nick of time from The Beard's burning apartment. But, alas, she gives him the gate in the end.**

Cecil B. DeMille's *The Greatest Show on Earth*, circus films have notoriously done poor business with audiences; perhaps *The Prime Time* was a victim of guilt by association. Lewis also blames Essanjay Films, the releasing company, which, he says, went bankrupt, owing Mid-Continent $100,000. But the reality remains. *The Prime Time* was not the film Lewis needed to put him on the map, and it has since become a lost film with no known prints of it extant. Lewis' initial attempt to bring Hollywood back to Chicago had failed. But he was not done yet.

# CHAPTER TWO

★ LIVING VENUS ★ LUCKY PIERRE ★
★ DAUGHTER OF THE SUN ★ NATURE'S PLAYMATES★
★ GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BARES ★
★ BOIN-N-G! ★ BELL, BARE AND BEAUTIFUL ★
★ SCUM OF THE EARTH ★

# The early nudies

**Bloodied but unbowed, Mid-Continent forged ahead with its second feature, *Living Venus*—the first to bear the proud signature: Produced and Directed by Herschell Gordon Lewis.**

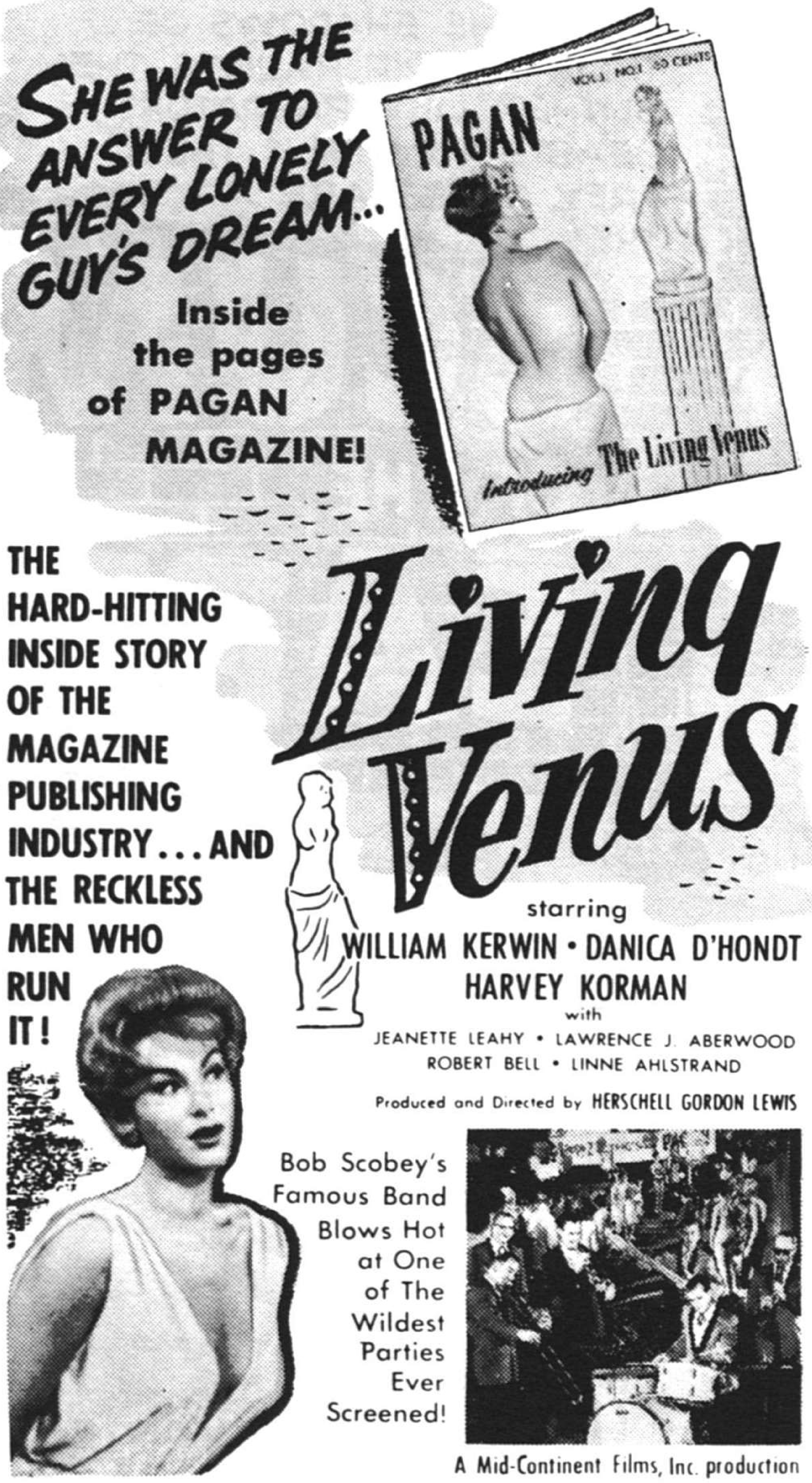
In *The Prime Time*, Friedman and Lewis followed Hollywood's own formulas of the period, promising a lot of sex, but delivering little or none. They intended *Living Venus* to be different. Not only would they continue to promise a lot of sex in the advertising for the film, but this time they would actually deliver some—just a bit more than in *The Prime Time*. The game, you see, was titillation.

The "bit more" of *Living Venus* took the form of a bevy of scantily clad beauties led by the well-endowed Danica D'Hondt, Lewis' "living venus" of the title. Still, the film remains more suggestive than graphic and contains no nudity whatsoever. According to Lewis, some semi-nude scenes were shot—which would account for a single bare breasted cheesecake shot appearing in the film's pressbook—but they were never used in the finished picture.

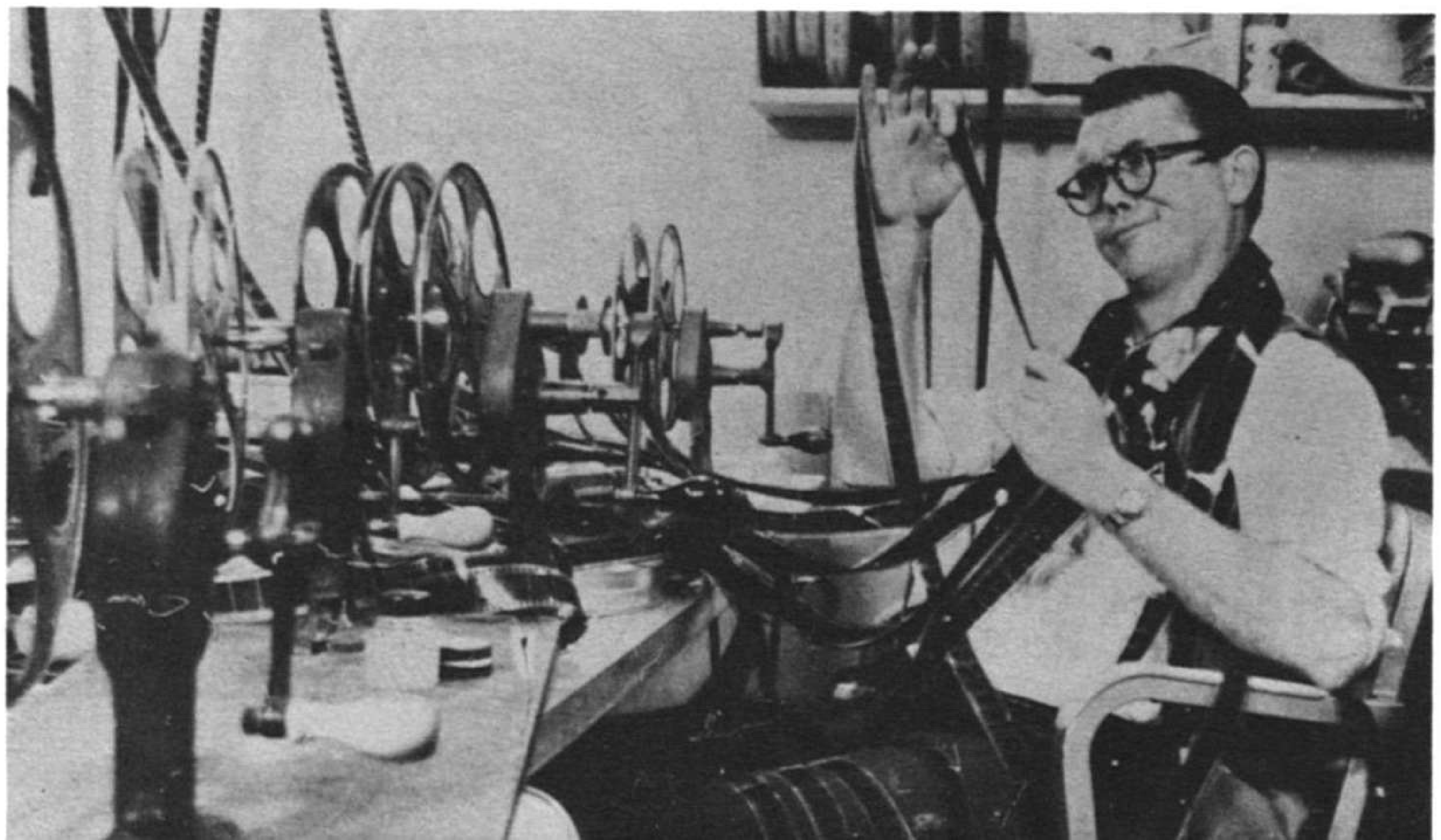
Lewis has often admitted that the protagonist of *Living Venus*, Jack Norwall, was a fictionalized version of Hugh Hefner. Fictional is the operative word considering the film's story line. Norwall, fired from *Newlywed* magazine, decides to publish his own skin magazine which he calls *Pagan*, using the statue of Venus De Milo as the publication's logo. He later finds his *living* Venus in the form of Peggy Brandon (D'Hondt), whom he persuades to pose for the magazine. Spurred by instant success, Norwall dumps his fiancee and begins a series of affairs with his models. When he eventually learns that his photographer, Ken, plans to marry Peggy, he ups and marries her himself. Norwall continues his affairs even as the magazine begins to fail; later he tells Peggy that he wants a divorce. Distraught, she kills herself and ends up floating face down in Norwall's lavish pool. Norwall loses his magazine empire and winds up a beaten and friendless man. Once again, morality triumphs.

*Living Venus* was the second and last film Lewis shot using a union crew. It seems that a crew member, when asked to plug in the camera, replied to Lewis: "That's not my job." Then informed that the man whose job it was was absent, Lewis offered to perform the minor task himself, whereupon the union threatened a walkout. Herschell vowed "Never again!" to unions; perhaps this is the reason why there are no existing technical credits for *Living Venus*.

Because of its modicum of overt sex, *Living Venus* was much more financially successful than *The Prime Time*. Lewis claims that *Venus* was still getting play dates ten years after it was first released. The film had "legs." Convinced that they were on the right track, Friedman and Lewis then decided to jump headfirst


SHE WAS THE ANSWER TO EVERY LONELY GUY'S DREAM...
Inside the pages of PAGAN MAGAZINE!
VOL. 1 NO. 1 50 CENTS
PAGAN
Introducing The Living Venus
THE HARD-HITTING INSIDE STORY OF THE MAGAZINE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY... AND THE RECKLESS MEN WHO RUN IT!
Living Venus
starring
WILLIAM KERWIN • DANICA D'HONDT
HARVEY KORMAN
with
JEANETTE LEAHY • LAWRENCE J. ABERWOOD
ROBERT BELL • LINNE AHLSTRAND
Produced and Directed by HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS
Bob Scobey's Famous Band Blows Hot at One of The Wildest Parties Ever Screened!
A Mid-Continent Films, Inc. production

1

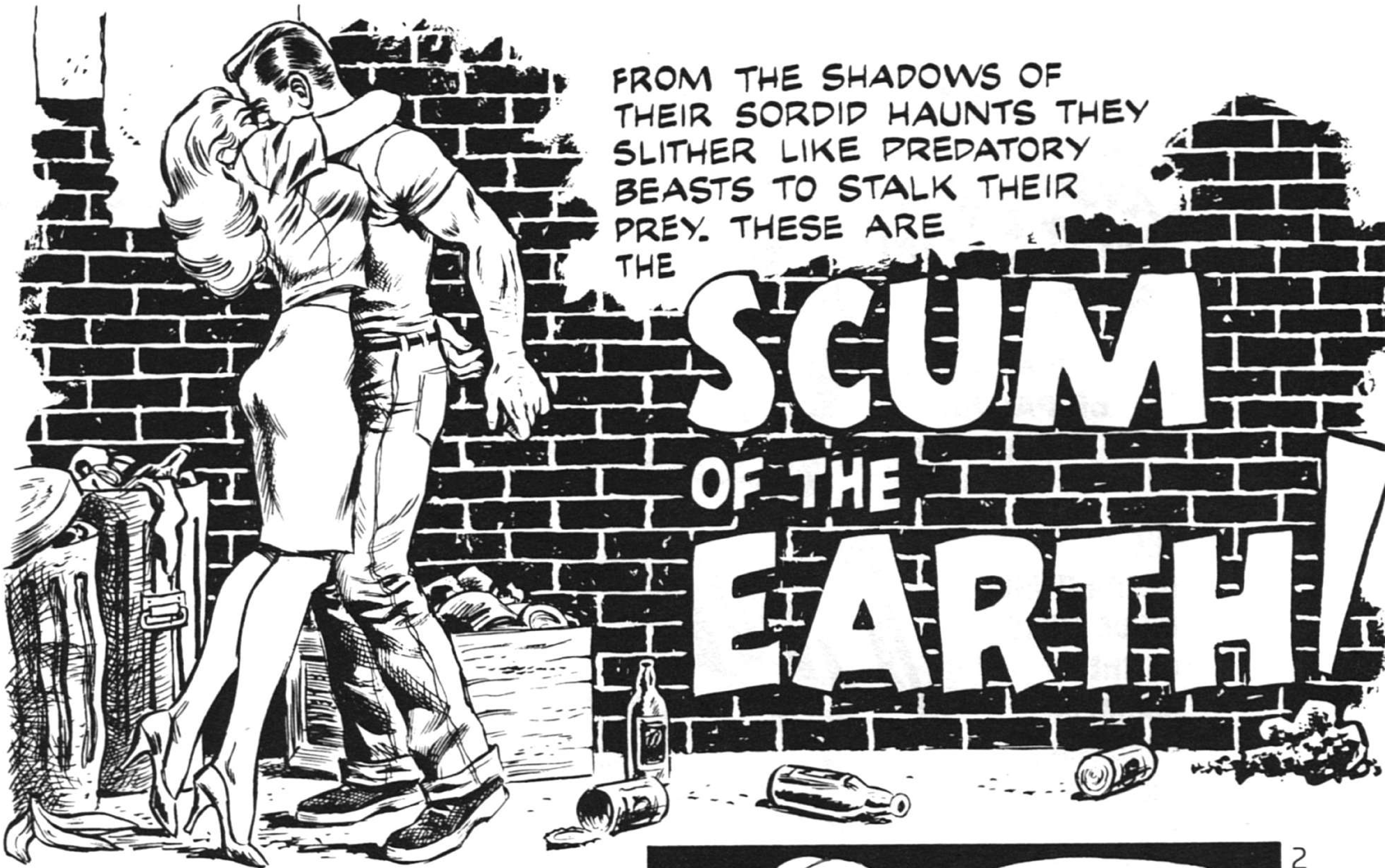


1 **This still from *BOIN-N-G* (1962) shows no nudity, but it does give a picture of the level of sophistication of Lewis' editing equipment at the time. Looks like state-of-the-art.**

into the fledgling nudie film industry with their next film, *Lucky Pierre*.

Starring Chicago comedian Billy Falbo and "Pierre's Playmates," *Lucky Pierre* dealt with the erotic fantasies of a bumbling, repressed artist. One sequence includes a delightful send-up of other nudie films being made at the time. Pierre goes to a drive-in where the film being shown is a nudie called *The Picnic at the Playground*. The scene shown on the drive-in screen consists of nothing more than three naked women climbing on a child's jungle gym and eating sandwiches. Watching, Pierre gets hungry and places an order through the drive-in car speaker. To his delight, his order is delivered by a topless waitress wearing a scanty apron.

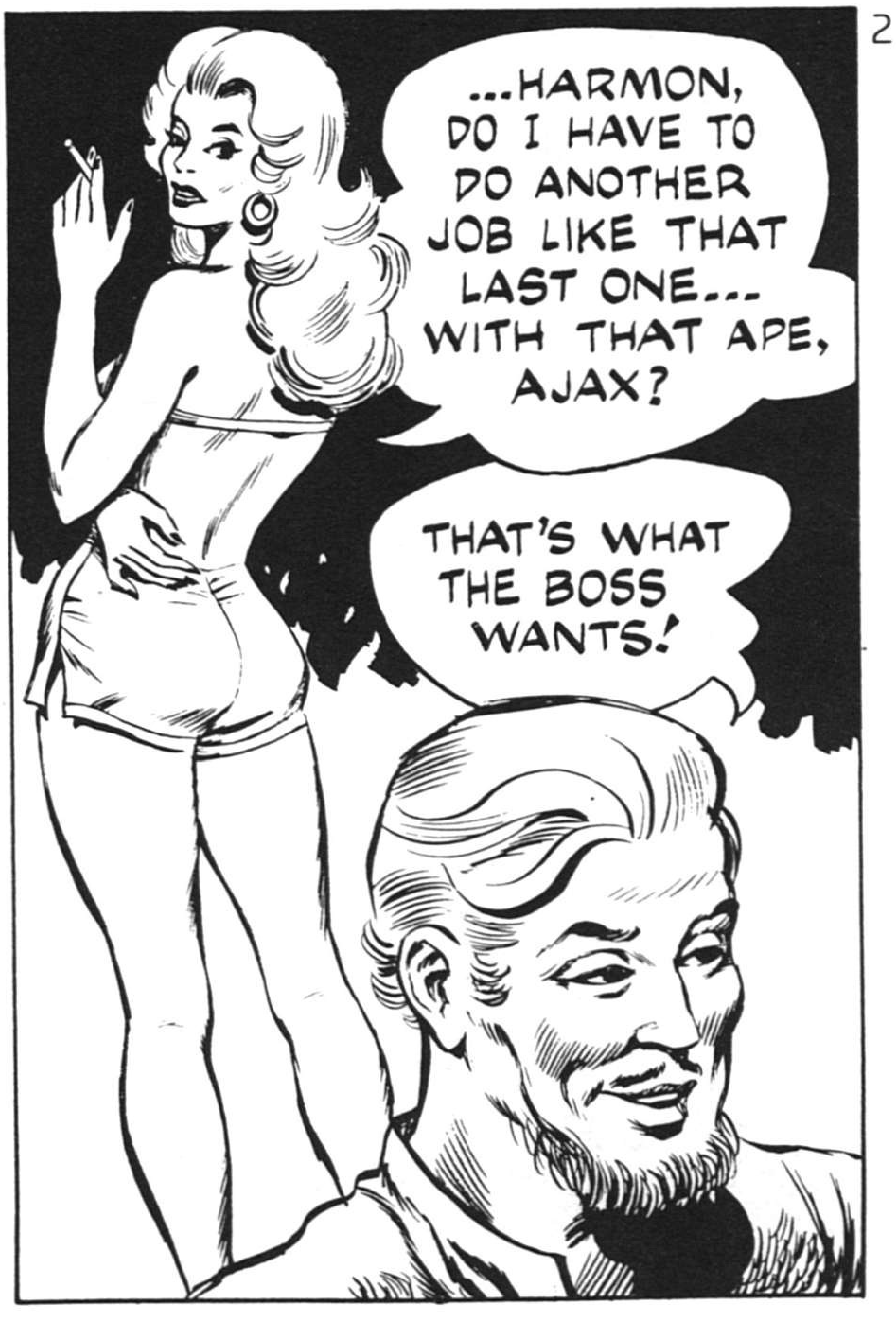
Shot in Chicago in less than one week on a miniscule budget, *Lucky Pierre* brought Lewis and Friedman their first unqualified financial success. The two partners had served as the sole crew for the film, with Lewis handling camera

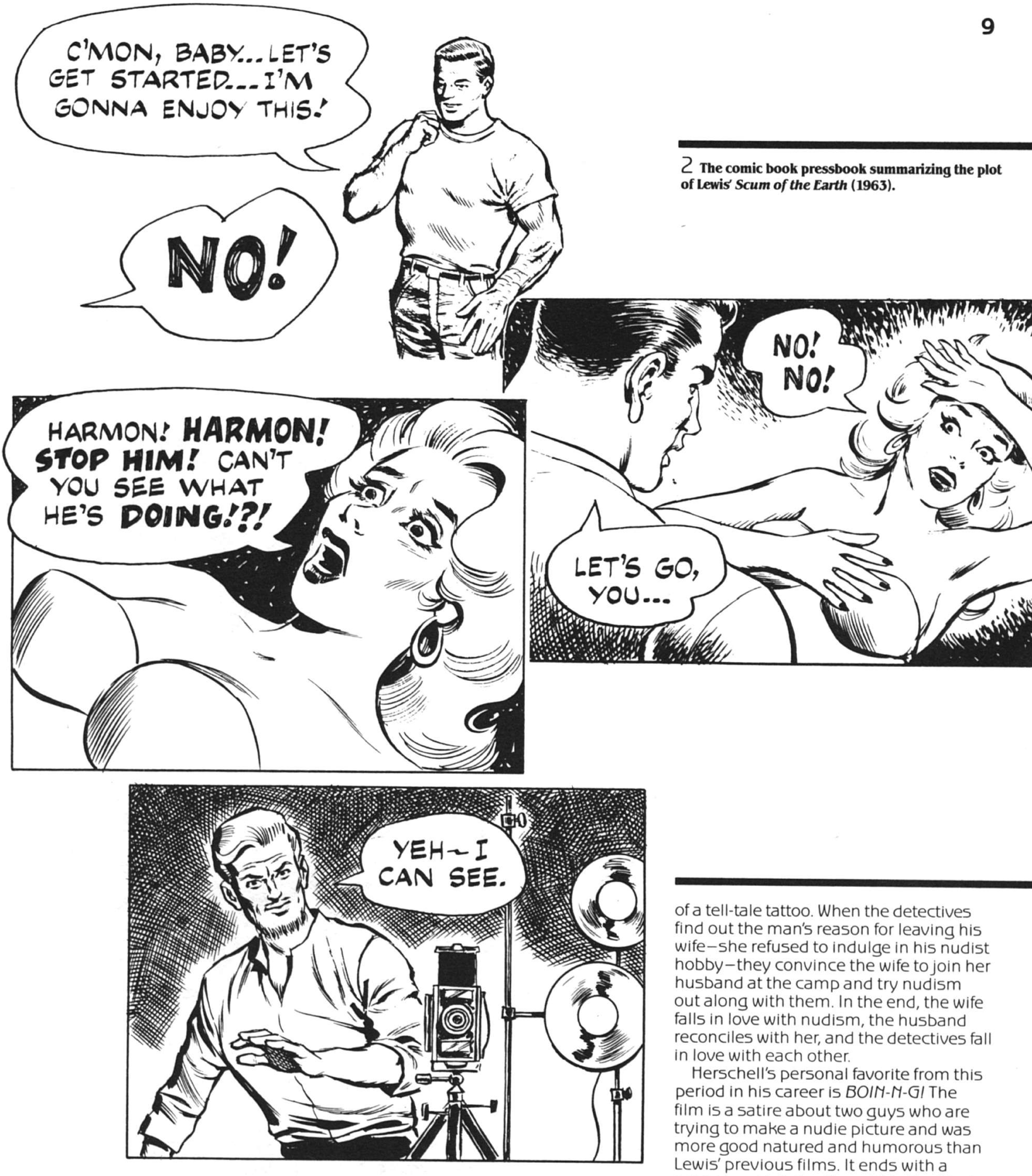

FROM THE SHADOWS OF THEIR SORDID HAUNTS THEY SLITHER LIKE PREDATORY BEASTS TO STALK THEIR PREY. THESE ARE THE
SCUM OF THE EARTH!

and direction while Friedman handled the sound. *Lucky Pierre* was also Lewis' first film in color, and inaugurated his use of color adjectives in his advertising. *Lucky Pierre*, for example, was not merely in color, but in "Fleshtone Color" and/or "Cutie Color and Skinemascope," depending upon which ad you saw.

*Daughter of the Sun* and *Nature's Playmates*, which followed very quickly, were nudist camp pictures of the type that had been parodied in *Lucky Pierre*. The star of *Daughter of the Sun* was Rusty Allen. She portrays a school teacher who runs afoul of the school board because of her nudist activities. By the end of the picture, she has seduced a member of the board into joining her at the camp, and all's well that ends well.

In *Nature's Playmates*, a male/female team of Chicago private detectives is hired by a woman to find her missing husband. They trace him to a Florida nudist camp, identifying him by means


2
...HARMON, DO I HAVE TO DO ANOTHER JOB LIKE THAT LAST ONE... WITH THAT APE, AJAX?
THAT'S WHAT THE BOSS WANTS!


C'MON, BABY... LET'S GET STARTED... I'M GONNA ENJOY THIS!
NO!
NO! NO!
LET'S GO, YOU...
HARMON! HARMON! STOP HIM! CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT HE'S DOING!?!
YEH—I CAN SEE.
THEY DWELL AND THRIVE IN A MORASS OF DEPRAVITY!!!
SCUM OF THE EARTH!

2 **The comic book pressbook summarizing the plot of Lewis' *Scum of the Earth* (1963).**

of a tell-tale tattoo. When the detectives find out the man's reason for leaving his wife—she refused to indulge in his nudist hobby—they convince the wife to join her husband at the camp and try nudism out along with them. In the end, the wife falls in love with nudism, the husband reconciles with her, and the detectives fall in love with each other.

Herschell's personal favorite from this period in his career is *BOIN-N-G!* The film is a satire about two guys who are trying to make a nudie picture and was more good natured and humorous than Lewis' previous films. It ends with a scene in which the film within the film is screened for a potential distributor. As the filmmakers' awesomely amateurish attempt at filmmaking ends, the distributor announces: "That's the worst picture I ever saw. I'll buy it!" This was Lewis' wry comment on the taste of most distributors.

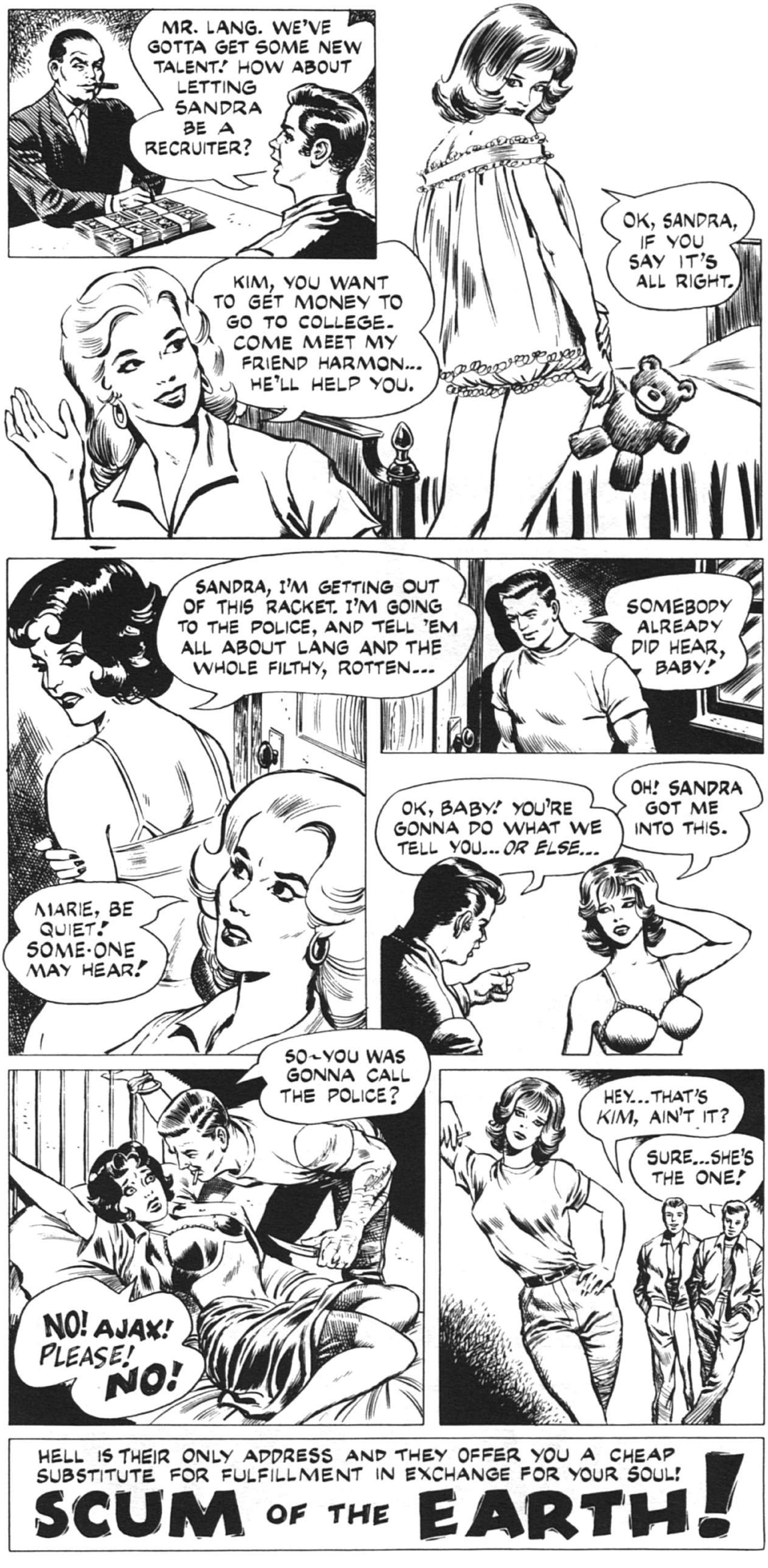
*Goldilocks and the Three Bares* is another conversion-to-nudism story in-

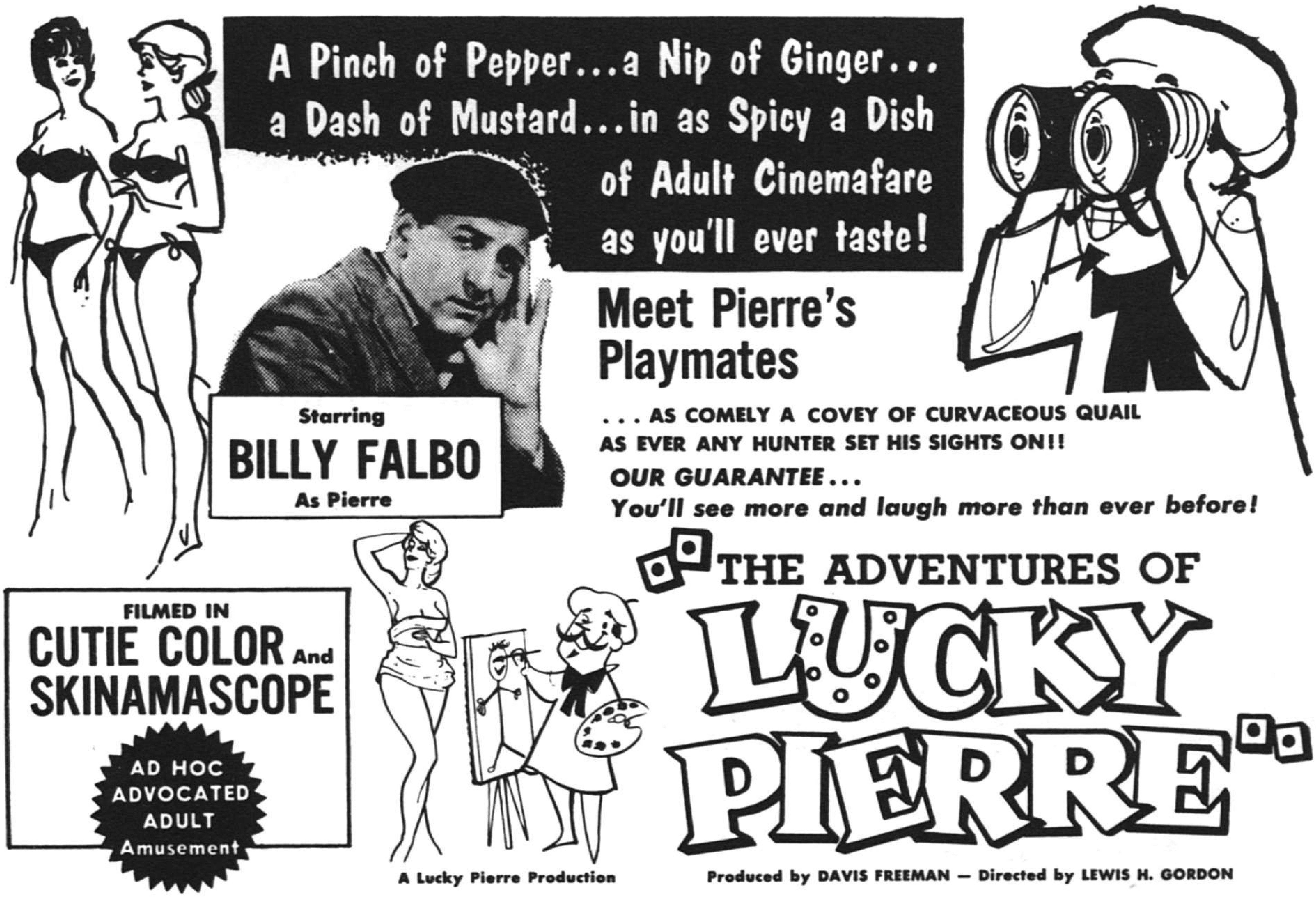
3 ***BOIN-N-G!*** **(1963) remains Herschell's favorite from his early "nudie" period.**

volving two young couples who find themselves falling in love with their partners as they strip to the buff. In *Bell, Bare, and Beautiful*, a young millionaire pursues the girl of his dreams, burlesque queen Gina Adair, through a series of nudist camp backgrounds, eventually winning her from the clutches of her mob-connected agent.

*Scum of the Earth*, released in 1963, brought to a close Lewis' first period of nudie and sex pictures. The film's pressbook takes the form of a three-page comic strip which recounts the film's plot. The film seems to have been a dark variation on the plot of *Living Venus*. It deals with a pornographic photographer named Harmon and his top model, Sandra, who together lure two innocent young girls astray and even place them in danger at the hands (and other parts) of a maniacal stud named "Ajax."

Lewis and Friedman signed all their pictures from this period as Davis Free-


MR. LANG. WE'VE GOTTA GET SOME NEW TALENT! HOW ABOUT LETTING SANDRA BE A RECRUITER?
KIM, YOU WANT TO GET MONEY TO GO TO COLLEGE. COME MEET MY FRIEND HARMON... HE'LL HELP YOU.
OK, SANDRA, IF YOU SAY IT'S ALL RIGHT.
SANDRA, I'M GETTING OUT OF THIS RACKET. I'M GOING TO THE POLICE, AND TELL 'EM ALL ABOUT LANG AND THE WHOLE FILTHY, ROTTEN...
MARIE, BE QUIET! SOME-ONE MAY HEAR!
SOMEBODY ALREADY DID HEAR, BABY!
OK, BABY! YOU'RE GONNA DO WHAT WE TELL YOU... OR ELSE...
OH! SANDRA GOT ME INTO THIS.
SO-YOU WAS GONNA CALL THE POLICE?
NO! AJAX! PLEASE! NO!
HEY...THAT'S KIM, AIN'T IT?
SURE...SHE'S THE ONE!
HELL IS THEIR ONLY ADDRESS AND THEY OFFER YOU A CHEAP SUBSTITUTE FOR FULFILLMENT IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR SOUL!
SCUM OF THE EARTH!



A Pinch of Pepper...a Nip of Ginger...
...a Dash of Mustard...in as Spicy a Dish
of Adult Cinemafare
as you'll ever taste!

Meet Pierre's
Playmates

... AS COMELY A COVEY OF CURVACEOUS QUAIL
AS EVER ANY HUNTER SET HIS SIGHTS ON!!

*OUR GUARANTEE...*
*You'll see more and laugh more than ever before!*

Starring
**BILLY FALBO**
As Pierre

THE ADVENTURES OF
LUCKY
PIERRE

FILMED IN
CUTIE COLOR And
SKINAMASCOPE

AD HOC
ADVOCATED
ADULT
Amusement

A Lucky Pierre Production

Produced by DAVIS FREEMAN — Directed by LEWIS H. GORDON

3

man, Producer, and Lewis H. Gordon, Director. By this time, they had also picked up a third partner, Stan Kohlberg, a Chicago theatre owner, and had formed a new company: Box Office Spectaculars, Inc. They were now on the verge of their biggest success and their most original screen breakthrough: the birth of the Gore Film.

# CHAPTER THREE

# *The genesis of gore*

**By 1963 Herschell Gordon Lewis was foreseeing a dead-end to the nudie genre. The major film companies were catching up with him by spicing up their own films. Lewis felt that to attempt to push back the bounds of morality even further in the sexual area would be risky in terms of censorship and even potential litigation. So, turning in the opposite and somewhat more sinister direction, he selected hard-core screen violence as the next field that was ripe for exploitation.**

Up until this time, mainstream films had always handled scenes of violent death in a restrained and antiseptic manner. The camera had always averted its eye at the proper moment, and the victim of violence usually died cleanly with little or no exposure of "blood." Their eyes were usually peacefully closed as well. Things would soon be very different.

*Blood Feast* was shot in Miami in six to nine days, depending upon whose account one believes. Produced by Friedman on a budget as low as the shooting schedule was short, the film's direction, photography, and original music score were all supplied by Herschell Lewis himself. The original screenplay was written by Allison Louise Downe, a former Miami probation officer, who would continue until 1971 as part of the Lewis team, writing scripts for him, as well as assisting him with casting, talent coordination and creation of gore effects.

The plot of *Blood Feast* concerns an average family who, in its pursuit of "keeping up with the Joneses," has the extreme misfortune of hiring an exotic but insane Egyptian caterer, Fuad Ramses, to provide the food for an upcoming birthday celebration. The daughter who is just turning twenty-one is played by Connie Mason, a former Playboy playmate-of-the-month. Fuad says he will prepare them the most exotic and delectable feast in the world, intoning the name of the meal in Egyptian. The parents are delighted, never suspecting that the Egyptian words translate as "blood feast."

Setting about the task of obtaining the needed ingredients for his sublime meal, Fuad murders, mutilates and dismembers several hapless young women. One, attacked on a deserted beach at night, has her brains scooped out. Another, attacked while helpless in her bath, loses both legs. A third suffers a ceremonial heart-ectomy, while a fourth has her tongue unceremoniously ripped from her throat in mid-scream.

Other scenes depict in graphic detail the mixing and cooking of those grisly ingredients. In one scene, an oven is opened and a large pan removed that contains not only some charred limbs but a perfectly rounded pair of roasted breasts as well. This scene was shot on location in a Miami pizza parlor.

All these gruesome deeds have, in Fuad's twisted mind, something to do

**While His Nubile Young Girl Victims Screamed Out Their Life Blood, He Prepared the Most Horrendous Of All Feasts.**

Box Office Spectaculars, Inc.
*Presents*

# BLOOD FEAST

**An Admonition:**
IF YOU ARE THE PARENT OR THE GUARDIAN OF AN IMPRESSIONABLE ADOLESCENT — DO NOT BRING HIM OR PERMIT HIM TO SEE THIS MOTION-PICTURE

**MORE GRISLY THAN EVER IN BLOOD COLOR!**

*Introducing* CONNIE MASON YOU READ ABOUT HER IN PLAYBOY

PRODUCED BY DAVID F. FRIEDMAN • DIRECTED BY HERSCHELL G. LEWIS

1 **Just when you thought it was safe to go back to the beach! The girl on the beach (Ashlyn Martin) has just had her brains ripped out in the world's first gore film, Lewis' *Blood Feast* (1963).**

2 **Crazed Egyptian caterer Fuad Ramses (Mal Arnold) menaces heroine Connie Mason with a machete in her own kitchen.**

3 **The High Priest (Jerome Eden) demonstrates the latest techniques in heart-ectomy.**

1

with the revivification of the Egyptian goddess Ishtar. This is revealed in a dream sequence in which a high priest performs a ritual sacrifice on a young girl that involves a live snake and the removal of her pulsating heart. The hero and heroine of the film also learn of the historic ritual when they attend a lecture on Egyptian cults, including that of Ishtar. Of course, the police too have taken an interest in these ghastly deeds by now. Led by our hero, a detective who just happens to be the fiancée of the birthday girl, the police go in search of the madman.

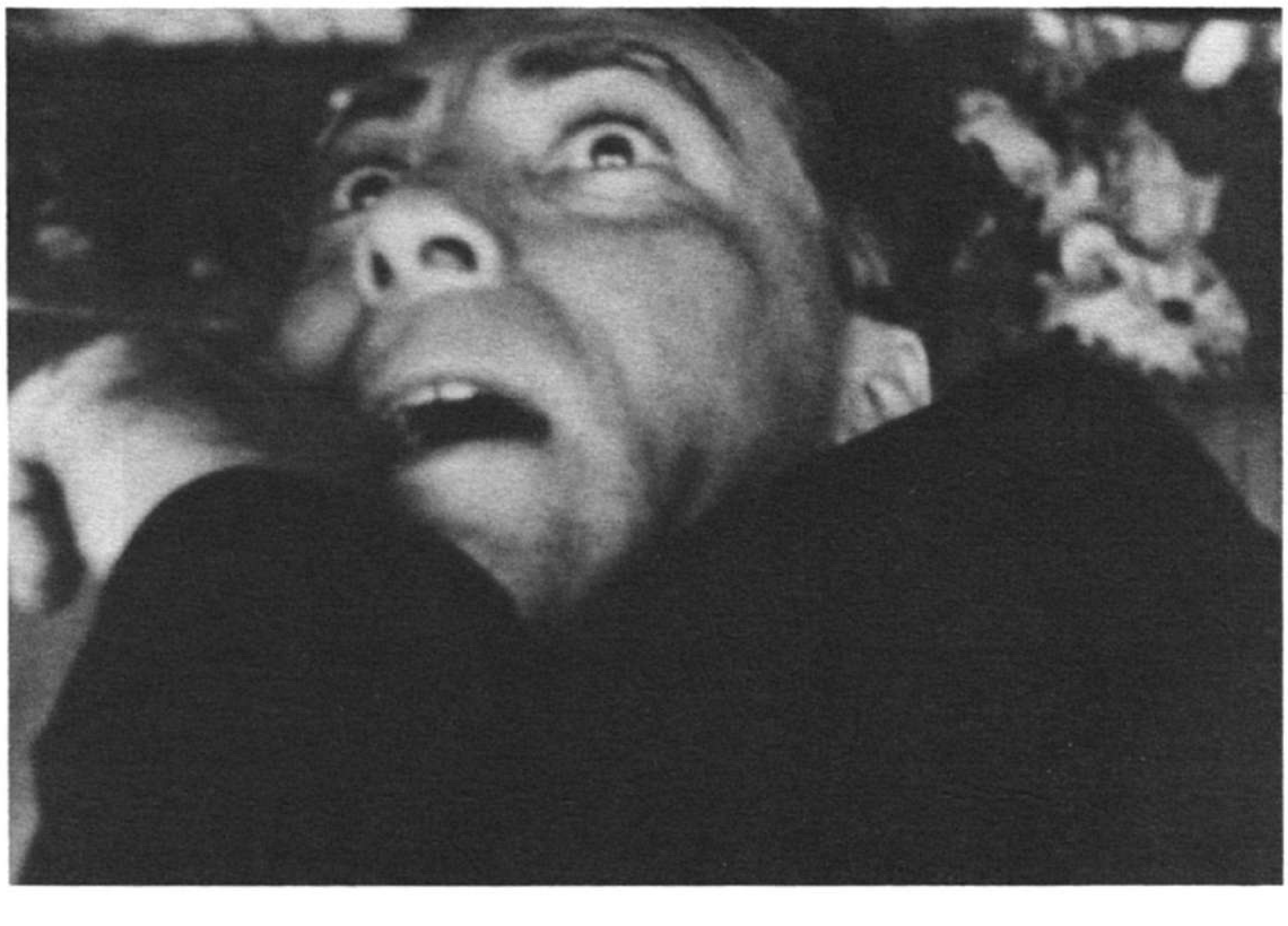
Fuad intends to obtain the final ingredient for his culinary masterpiece from the birthday girl herself. . .though what that ingredient is is left to the audience's imagination. In the kitchen, Fuad, after a few bumbling attempts, manages to dupe our heroine and menace her rather ineffectually with a machete. Naturally, her mother and the detective burst in in time to save the day.

2

4 **Fuad Ramses cowers in terror prior to his being crushed by a garbage compactor in the finale to *Blood Feast.***

3

4

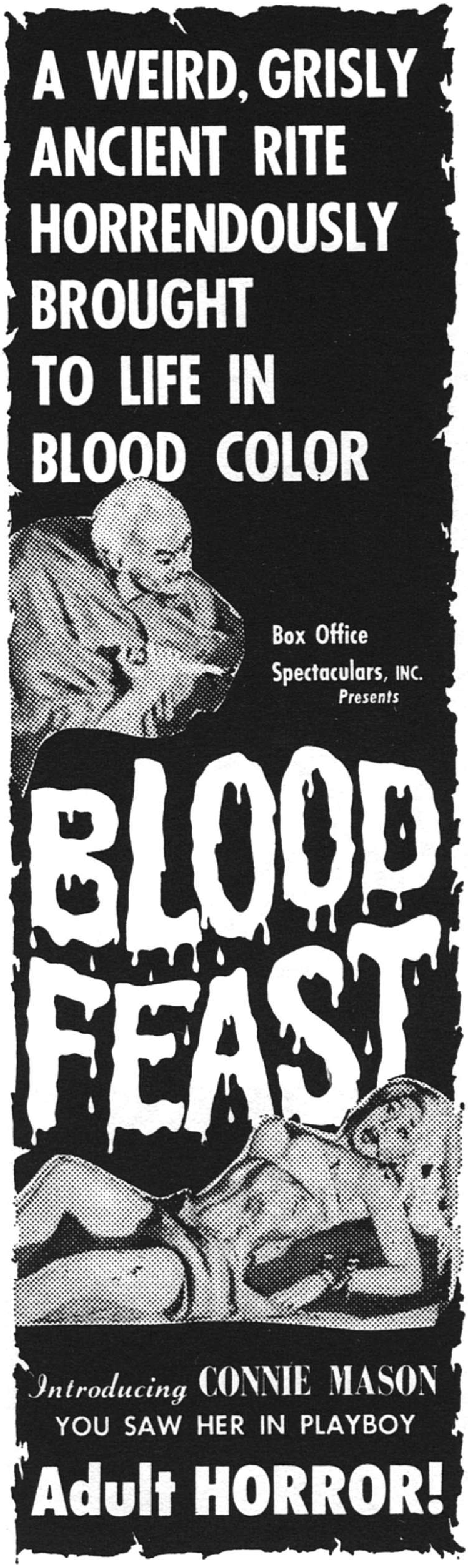


Fleeing across the blasted landscape of the Miami City garbage dump, Fuad climbs into the rear scoop compactor of a garbage truck to elude capture. Unaware, the driver cycles the compactor and Fuad is ground up with the rest of the garbage. Slyly, Herschell may have intended this ending to serve as a metaphor for the entire picture.

The stomach churning gore effects in *Blood Feast* were produced with the simplest materials: parts of department store mannequins, the internal organs of dead animals (mostly sheep, obtained from a local meatpacking plant), mortician's wax, a waxy modeling compound used by undertakers to reconstruct the features of accident victims for open casket funerals, and, finally, gallons of specially formulated stage blood. Herschell and his crew first concocted their unique blood mixture at Barfred Cosmetics in Coral Gables, which may still be selling the formula to this day. The

5 **A police captain (Scott H. Hall, left) and our hero, Pete Thornton (Bill Kerwin, using the pseudonym Thomas Wood) find a woman's mangled body. Looks like a bloody Jackson Pollack.**

6 ***Blood Feast* (1963).**


A WEIRD, GRISLY
ANCIENT RITE
HORRENDOUSLY
BROUGHT
TO LIFE IN
BLOOD COLOR
Box Office
Spectaculars, INC.
Presents
BLOOD
FEAST
Introducing CONNIE MASON
YOU SAW HER IN PLAYBOY
Adult HORROR!

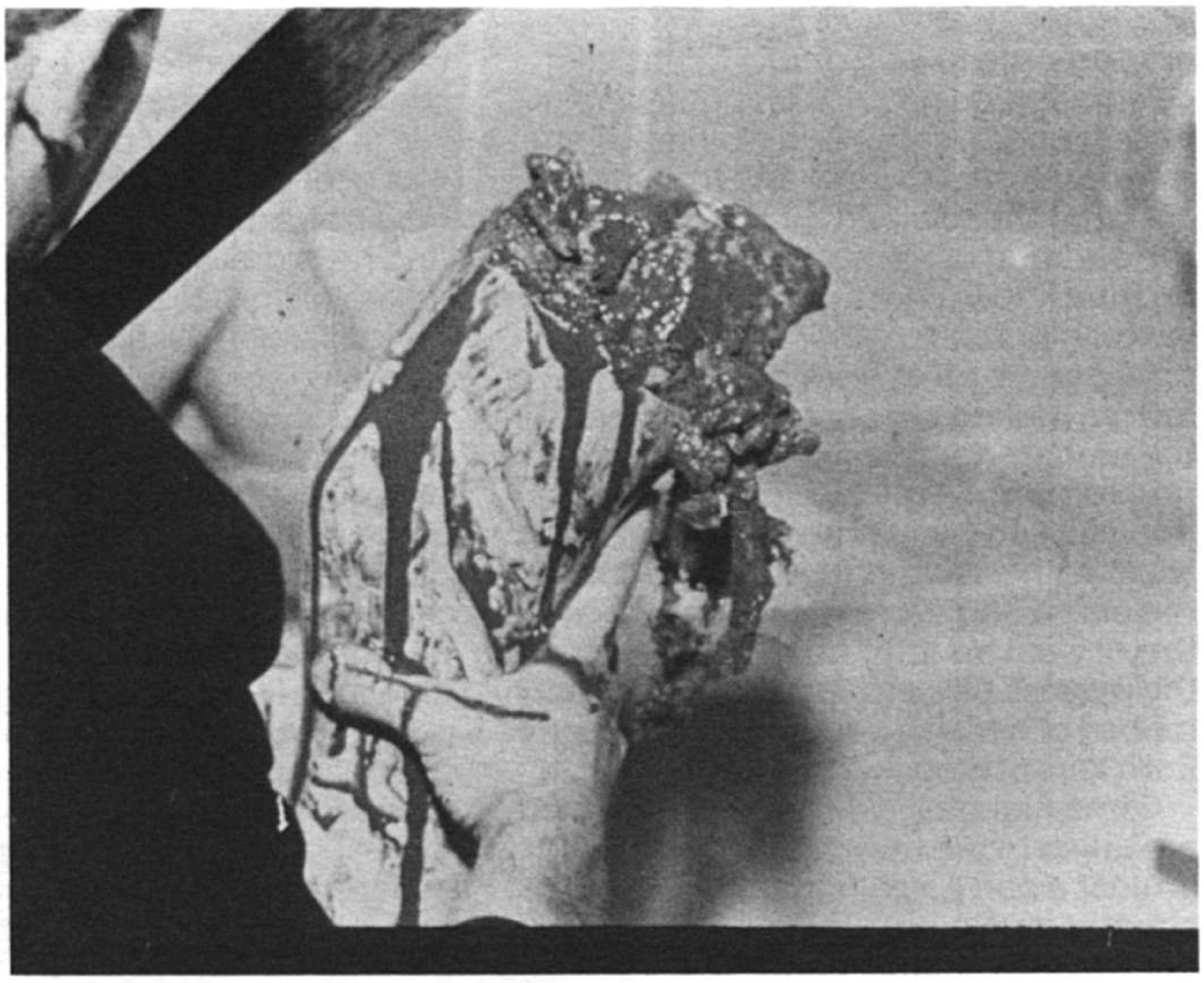
special formula served Lewis well through all of his future gore productions. I remember that there were always a few half-gallon jugs of the stuff lying around Herschell's Chicago office—just in case a need for them should arise.

Although *Blood Feast*'s gore effects might appear crude by today's standards, they were more than effective for their time. Louise Downe has told of receiving a horrified phone call from the owner of the previously mentioned Miami pizza parlor shortly after filming had been completed there. Seems the crew had forgotten to remove the roasted breasts from the oven before leaving and one of the pizza makers had discovered them there. Ugh!

Ever since its premiere in 1963 at the Bel Air Theatre in Peoria, Illinois, stories of the wide-eyed horror, fainting, vomiting and disgusted walkouts experienced by the film's first paying customers have become legend.

5

6



Despite its repugnant qualities—or, perhaps, because of them—*Blood Feast* quickly became Friedman and Lewis' highest grossing picture and their greatest success ever as a team.

★ 2000 MANIACS ★
★ COLOR ME BLOOD RED ★

# CHAPTER FOUR

# The gore goes on

**Encouraged by the pot of gold he had unearthed with his discovery of gore, Herschell decided that his next project should be bigger and classier, boasting a literate script, more varied locations, better production values and superior acting. With this in mind and the knowledge that the Civil War Centennial was coming up, he penned the screenplay for *2000 Maniacs* himself in 1964. The film was shot in less than two weeks in the town of St. Cloud, Florida, which was rechristened Pleasant Valley for its celluloid debut. Many of St. Cloud's citizens played bit parts in the picture, chiefly as the 2000 maniacs of the title.**

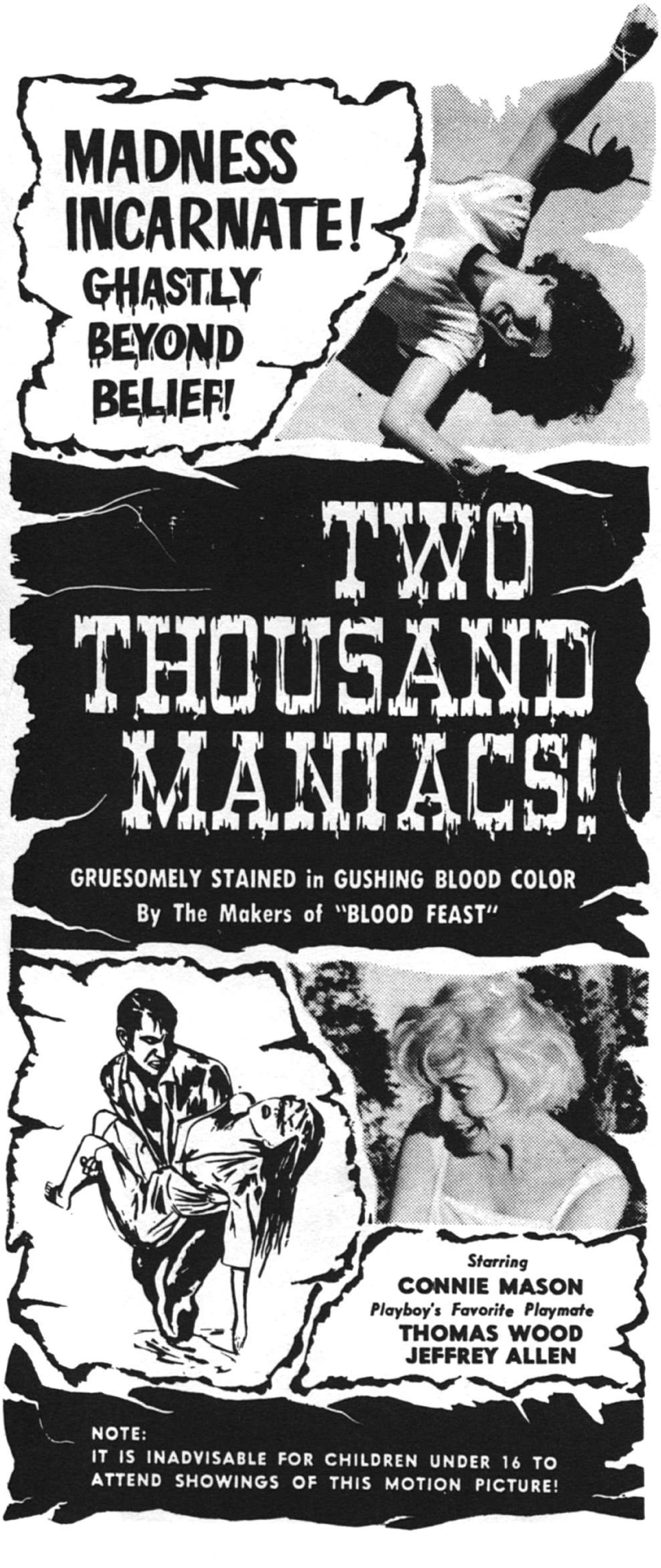
*2000 Maniacs* is basically a macabre variation of the plot of the hit Broadway musical *Brigadoon*. A small southern town whose citizens were massacred by Union troops during the Civil War magically reappears a hundred years later to wreak revenge on six northern tourists. Detoured off the main road, the northerners enter the town to find a Centennial celebration going on. With Confederate flags flying everywhere, Buckman, the mayor, informs the tourists that they are to be the town's honored guests for the duration of the celebration. Little do they know what the town actually has in store for them.

All seems pleasant enough until a townie named Harper takes Bea, one of the tourists, for a walk. Instead of getting romantic—the audience's expectation—he suddenly pulls out a knife and slices off her thumb. Then, as if to prove the old saying "Give them a thumb and they'll want an arm," he takes Bea to the mayor's office where she is summarily robbed of her arm with an axe; she dies from loss of blood.

Come nightfall, the other northerners are taken to the town barbecue where, amidst a party atmosphere of lively country music, smiling children, and waving flags, they fail to notice Bea's severed arm being roasted on a spit. By the end of the evening, Bea's husband, John, joins her in death. After being told that he has been selected to judge a horse race, his arms and legs are tied to four horses, and he is drawn and quartered as they gallop off in four different directions.

Meanwhile, the film's hero and heroine, Tom and Terry (played by Thomas Wood and Connie Mason), come upon a stone memorial bearing a plaque tracing the history of Pleasant Valley. This discovery along with the mysterious disappearances of Bea and John convince them that they are not the guests of the townsfolk at all, but their intended victims. They decide to split and inform the authorities.

The bloody slaughter continues the next day with the demise of the other vacationing couple, David and Beverly Wells. David is placed in a barrel laced inside with long, sharp spikes. The barrel is then rolled down a hill, turning him into a bloody pulp.


MADNESS INCARNATE!
GHASTLY BEYOND BELIEF!
TWO THOUSAND MANIACS!
GRUESOMELY STAINED in GUSHING BLOOD COLOR
By The Makers of "BLOOD FEAST"
Starring
CONNIE MASON
Playboy's Favorite Playmate
THOMAS WOOD
JEFFREY ALLEN
NOTE:
IT IS INADVISABLE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 16 TO ATTEND SHOWINGS OF THIS MOTION PICTURE!

1 **Two of the *2000 Maniacs* play their own ghastly version of roll out the barrel. The maniacs pictured are Linda Cochran (Betsy) and Ben Moore (Lester). Their victim is tourist David Wells (Michael Korb).**

1

Beverly's fate is even worse because it's more drawn out. She is tied up beneath a huge boulder, which is rigged to fall on her from a platform. The townies intend to play a variation on the old "dunk 'em" game. As the suspense mounts, a bullseye is scored and the rock falls, crushing her to death. Tom and Terry escape their guards and flee in their car, taking along one of the Pleasant Valley children as hostage. They release the child at the detour out of town and proceed on to the police. The police don't believe them, however, so the pair urges them to go back with them to the site of the detour. But when they get there, the road and the town have completely vanished. In the back of their car, Tom and Terry find a toy model of a gibbet and hangman's noose, left there by the child they had taken hostage and released. And they are left to ponder the reality of what has happened to them. Meanwhile, the inhabitants of the now ghostly-looking town

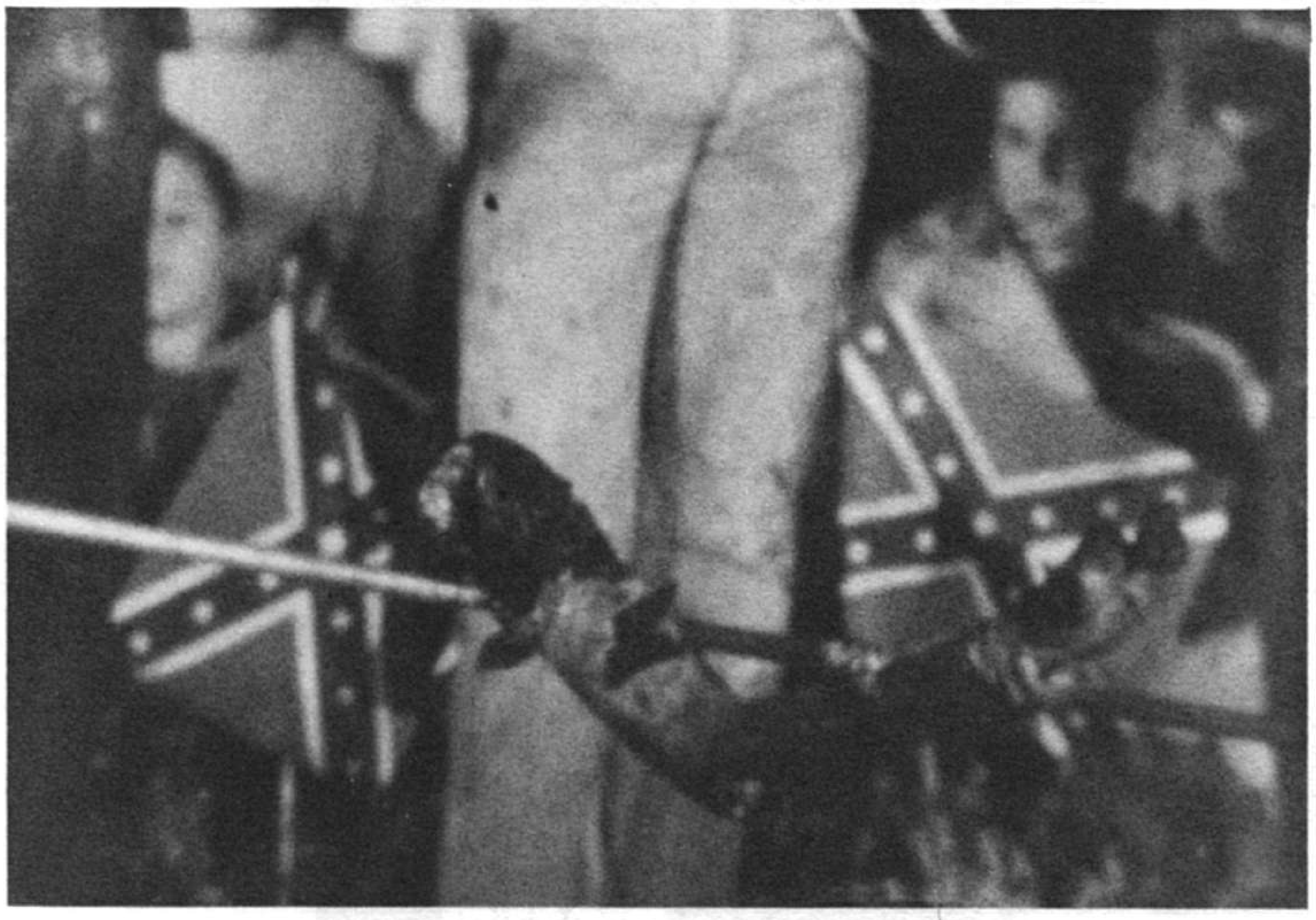
2

of Pleasant Valley begin making plans for their next Centennial celebration in 2065. Sequel anyone?

Herschell remains very proud of *2000 Maniacs*, the "big picture" that he had succeeded in making on a budget of between $20,000 and $40,000. For years he kept the prop plaque from the film hanging on the living room wall of his Highland Park, Illinois home as a fond reminder of his accomplishment. How was he able to make a full-length 35mm color feature on such a low budget? First, one must own the means of production. In Herschell's case, this meant owning one old, but serviceable 35mm Mitchell motion picture camera, sound and lighting equipment—some of which was homemade—and 35mm editing gear. Second, one must be able to work with a cast and crew composed mainly of amateurs, experienced or otherwise. Herschell always hired people who were willing to work for little money in exchange

3

4



5

2 **Harper (Mark Douglas) cuts off the thumb of Bea Miller (Shelby Livingston), a northern tourist, in Lewis' *2000 Maniacs* (1964). This is the first indication that all is not right at the Pleasant Valley Centennial Celebration.**

3 **A close-up of the thumb cutting scene taken from a frame enlargement.**

4 **A bunch of good ole boys enjoy a gory good ole time by removing Bea Miller's arm. The bunch, from left to right: Mark Douglas, Gary Bakeman, Jeffrey Allen, Ben Moore.**

5 **Bea's severed arm is roasted on a spit at the Pleasant Valley Centennial barbecue, to the lively strains of Lewis' country music score.**

for the experience they would get or the screen credits that might serve to propel them to a shot at Hollywood. Third, one must work almost exclusively in real locales in small, relatively unsophisticated communities. Herschell was a master at getting local authorities and other power brokers to help him secure locations, rolling stock (automobiles, police cars, ambulances, and so on), and crowds of free extras simply by impressing the locals with: "We're making a movie here, and we'd like you to be part of it."

By the time he made *2000 Maniacs,* Herschell had this formula pretty well perfected. He and his crew literally took over the beautiful, picturesque community of St. Cloud. The whole town turned out for the filming of the Centennial celebration sequence, National Car Rental provided the cars for free, and the fire department brought out its snorkel to be used as a camera crane. Fearing that the crowd might disperse before he'd cap-

PLEASAN
ME TO
CENTENNIA
APRIL
APRIL 1965

6

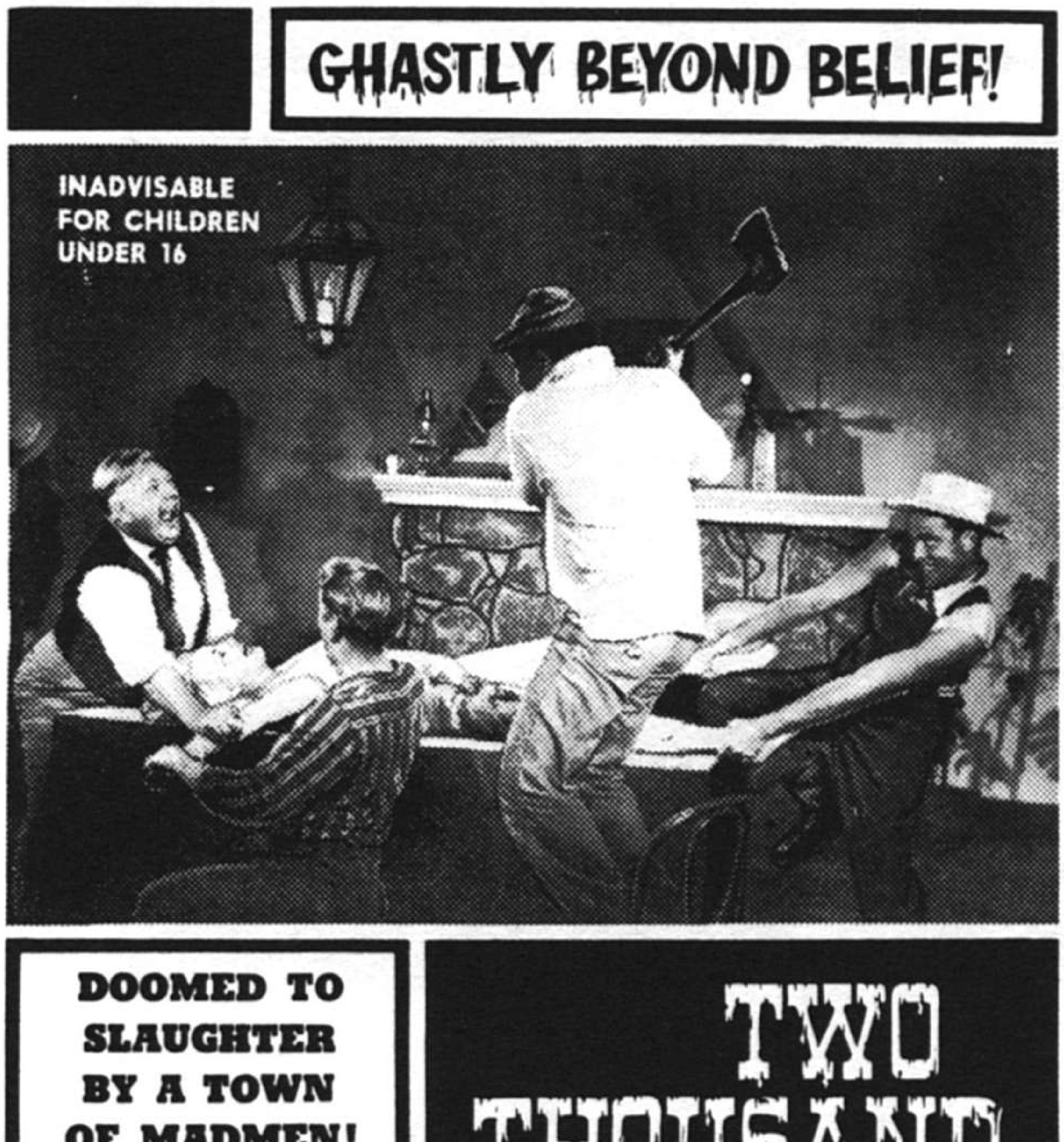
**GRUESOMELY STAINED IN BLOOD COLOR!**

Produced by DAVID F. FRIEDMAN / Directed by HERSCHELL G. LEWIS

tured them on film, Herschell filmed his long shots first; later, he shot the dialogue and close-ups using only a few figures waving flags in the background to suggest the surrounding mob.

Though not unsuccessful, *2000 Maniacs* was never to attain the popularity or financial success of *Blood Feast*. The film is still playing drive-ins and hard-tops in the South as well as grindhouses in the North to this day. It is also available for rental on 16mm through Films Incorporated and slated for a major theatrical re-release through a new company called Epics International, which also owns the theatrical rights to *Blood Feast*. Furthermore, Charles Band's Cult Video and Force Video have released *Blood Feast* and *2000 Maniacs* on videocassette.

Forging ahead, Lewis completed his gore trilogy with a modest little picture called *Color Me Blood Red*, released in 1965. The basic premise of the film (a mad artist murders to obtain materials



GHASTLY BEYOND BELIEF!

INADVISABLE
FOR CHILDREN
UNDER 16

DOOMED TO
SLAUGHTER
BY A TOWN
OF MADMEN!

*Starring*
CONNIE MASON
*Playboy's Favorite Playmate*
THOMAS WOOD
JEFFREY ALLEN

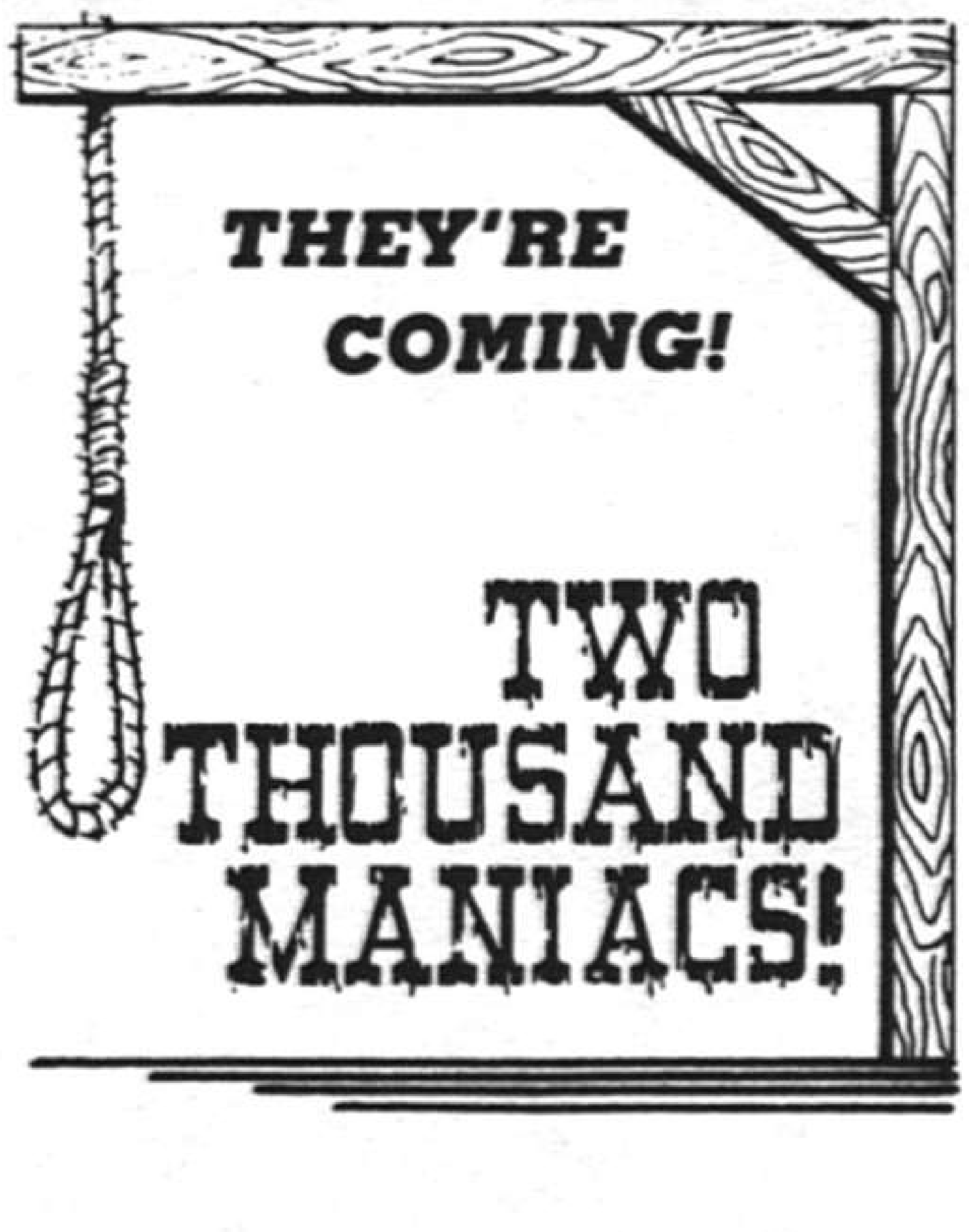
TWO
THOUSAND
MANIACS!

GRUESOMELY STAINED IN BLOOD COLOR!

WELCOME TO
PLEASANT VALLEY CENTENNIAL
APRIL 1865 - APRIL 1965

7

8


THEY'RE COMING!
TWO THOUSAND MANIACS!

6, 7, 8 ***2000 Maniacs* (1964).**

for his gory masterpieces) is similar to Roger Corman's 1959 camp classic *Bucket of Blood* in which Corman' hero (Dick Miller) uses his victims' bodies as armatures for his sculptures; Lewis' protagonist on the other hand drains his victims of their blood to obtain just the right shade of red pigment for his paintings. Lewis' film was not intended as a rip-off. In all likelihood, he didn't even know about Corman's film as he was never very interested in what other exploitation filmmakers were doing. At any rate, Lewis' film lived up to its title far more than Corman's did. In fact, Corman's title might have been more apt for the Lewis film.

When a struggling young artist, Adam Sorg, accidentally cuts his finger and splashes blood on his latest painting, he finds that the color actually enhances his work. Not wishing to face terminal anemia himself, he murders one of his models and applies her bloodied face to

9

10

11

**9 This model has been floored by the demands put on her by her artist/employer Adam Sorg (Don Joseph). From *Color Me Blood Red* (1965).**

**10 A badly decomposed body is uncovered on a lonely stretch of beach. This is the scene that employed the 24 worms. How many can you find?**

**11 The anti-hero of *Color Me Blood Red* literally throws himself into his work when he is shotgunned by the boyfriend of one of his models.**

his canvas. When this latest painting proves to be a big hit with the critics and he turns into an overnight success with his work in constant demand, he faces a blood supply problem.

Soon the model begins to run dry so he is forced to kill again. This time he dispatches a couple swimming in the ocean: he impales the man with a spear, then runs over the couple with his boat. He hangs the woman in his storeroom so that he can drain her as the need arises. Having laid in a new supply of blood, he buries the drained body of the model on the beach. This proves his undoing, however, when the body is discovered by some teenagers. The boyfriend of Sorg's current model becomes suspicious and, not wanting her to become the life blood of the artist's newest work, he blows our hero away with a shotgun. Sorg then creates his final work, an instant self-portrait, by falling face down on the canvas with a sickening SPLAT!

Herschell's favorite anecdote about the film involves some very unusual extras that were hired to work for him. He had decided that when the model's body was discovered on the beach, worms were to be crawling over her mangled face. Unfortunately, the film was being lensed in Sarasota, Florida, whose sandy soil lacks worms of any kind. So Lewis went to a local institution of higher learning (in some alternate versions of the story to a pensioner who raised worms as pets) and borrowed 24 worms from a professor in the biology department. The scene was filmed, but when the worms were gathered up, only 23 of them could be found. The cast and crew were pressed into service as a search party, but the missing wriggler remained elusive. Finally, the absurdity of the situation proved too ridiculous for one crew member, and so he took one of the remaining 23 worms and sliced it in half. Presto, there were now 24! Herschell says he never got a complaint from the professor about the two worms in the group that for some reason appeared a lot shorter than the others.

*Color Me Blood Red* completed Lewis' gore trilogy. It also marked the end of his partnership with David Friedman. Parting amicably, Friedman went to Hollywood to produce a series of nudies with bigger budgets, including *The Notorious Daughter of Fanny Hill, The Lustful Turk, The Headmistress* and others. Meanwhile Lewis set off in a new direction of his own, as if to confirm something he often jokingly said about himself: "I'm just a plain old country boy."

# CHAPTER FIVE

# "Just a plain old country boy"

**Lewis left the nudie field because of a growing fear of censorship and possible legal problems. Now his newly created gore genre was also beginning to have its problems with the arbiters of public taste and morality. Perhaps this is why *Blood Feast* was so much more financially successful than either *2000 Maniacs* or *Color Me Blood Red*. *Blood Feast*, being the first, had managed to sneak by the censors, who then proceeded to lie in wait for the next two gore films.**

At any rate, Herschell knew that he couldn't make much money from pictures that were having a hard time getting played in many areas. So he decided to move into a new genre altogether, one that while not of his origination would still bear the distinct stamp of his personality. He produced *Moonshine Mountain,* a "good ole boy" hillbilly epic as his best of all possible worlds: a something-for-everyone picture, with which he would use all of his past experience to entice a new potential audience.

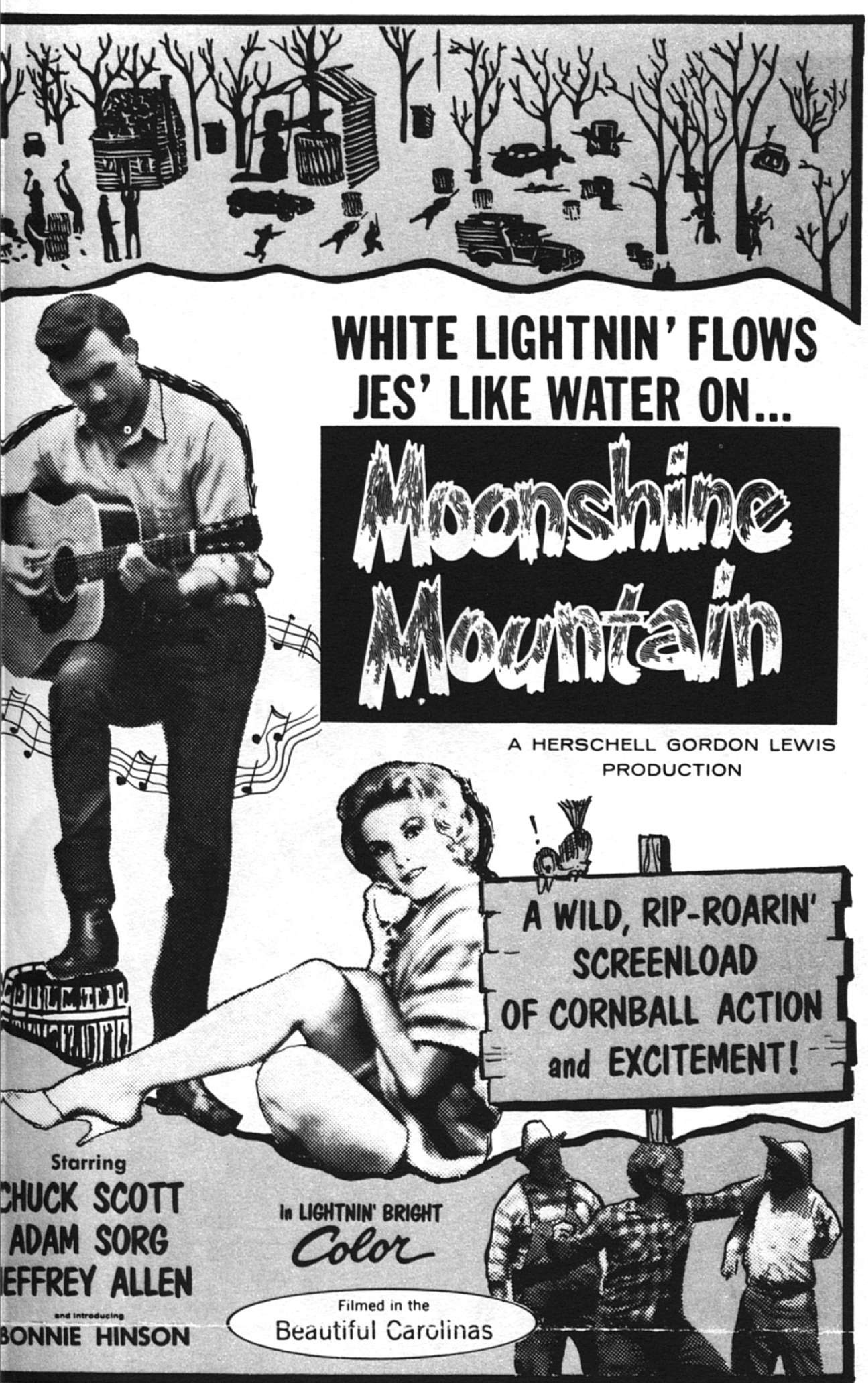
He would retain a liberal amount of sex and gore for the adults, but they would be softened so as to open the door for a younger audience as well. Knowing that his films played more successfully in the south and west than in the north and east, he decided to set his story in the south and add the extra attraction of country and western music. In short, with *Moonshine Mountain,* Herschell Gordon Lewis, the Wizard of Gore, was setting out to produce his first family picture.

*Moonshine Mountain* tells the story of Doug Martin, a successful country & western singer, who decides to go back to his roots in the Carolina hills to recharge his creative batteries and summon up some down home musical inspiration. Doug meets two hillbilly families, the Bashams and the Carpenters, who, with Sheriff Asa Potter, own what must be, they say, the world's largest illegal still. Potter's participation insures their safety from "the Revenoors."

Doug falls in love with Laura Carpenter, which complicates things when Doug's jealous fiancée Della arrives for a visit from up north. After a heated argument with Doug, Della leaves town but is stopped by Sheriff Potter on her way out. When she rejects his sexual advances and calls him "half a man!" Potter flies into a rage and brutally murders her with his handgun.

It turns out that this is not Potter's only crime. Using Luther, the dull-witted giant of the Basham clan, as his instrument, he has also caused the deaths of several federal agents. Also unbeknownst to anyone, Luther has been dumping the lifeless bodies of the agents into the still. "Is this what gives white lightnin' its magic ingredient?" Lewis muses in his novelization of the screenplay.

Doug discovers Potter's guilt and tells the Carpenters and the Bashams,


WHITE LIGHTNIN' FLOWS JES' LIKE WATER ON...
Moonshine Mountain
A HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS PRODUCTION
A WILD, RIP-ROARIN' SCREENLOAD OF CORNBALL ACTION and EXCITEMENT!
Starring
CHUCK SCOTT
ADAM SORG
JEFFREY ALLEN
and introducing
BONNIE HINSON
In LIGHTNIN' BRIGHT Color
Filmed in the Beautiful Carolinas

1 **Lust-crazed Sheriff Asa Potter (Adam Sorg) is about to rape the sweet but simple-minded Mary Lou.**

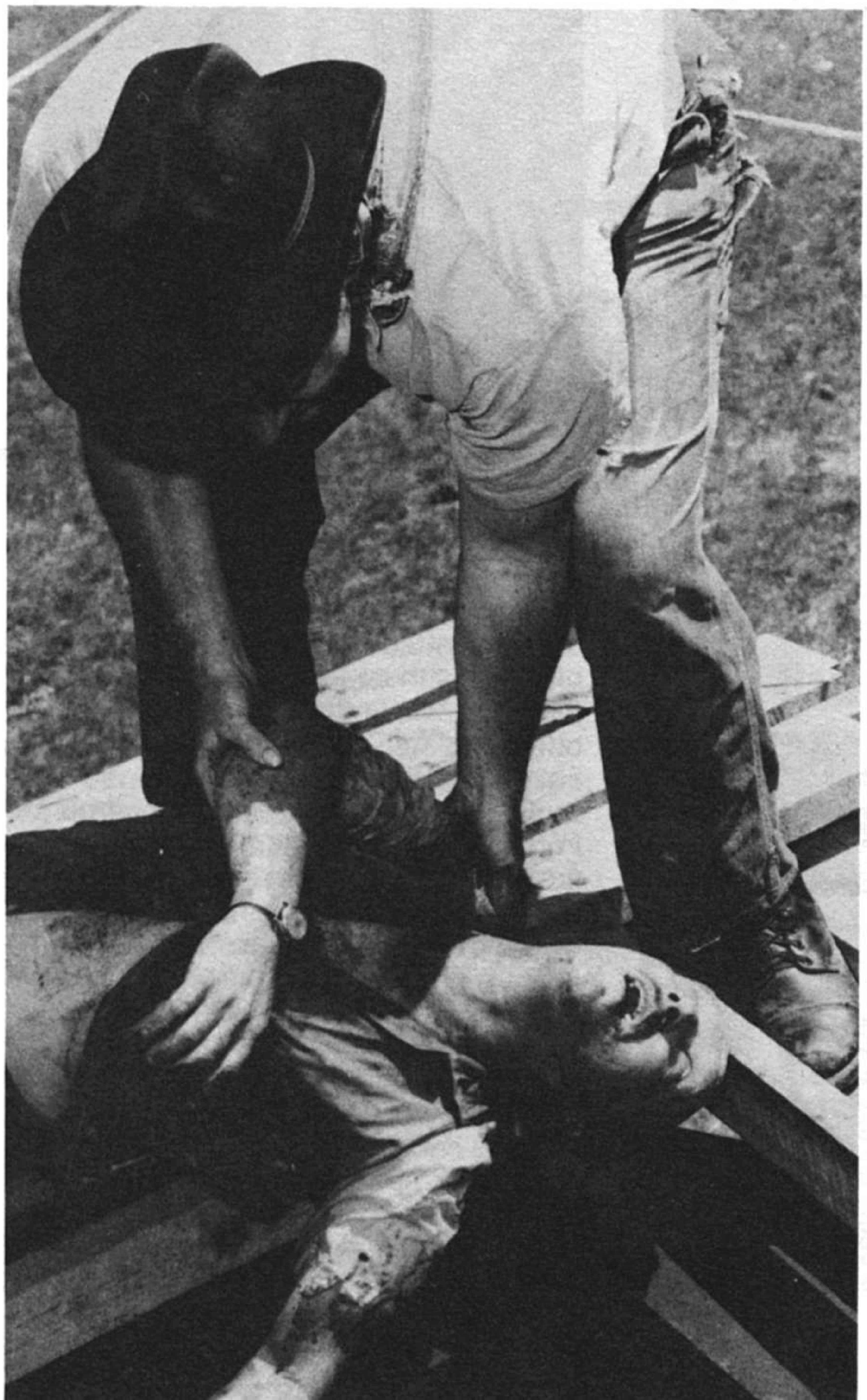
1

who both agree to inform the authorities. Fearing exposure, Potter gives Luther dynamite and tells him to blow up his accusers, but the plan backfires when the dim-witted Luther refuses and pursues him with it instead. Shooting Luther to save himself, Potter almost gets away, but is dispatched at the last moment with an axe wielded by Mary Lou, Laura's thumb-sucking half-sister, in revenge for Potter's having raped her in the film's first reel. The dynamite explosion destroys the still, scattering mash, metal and bits of Potter all over the place.

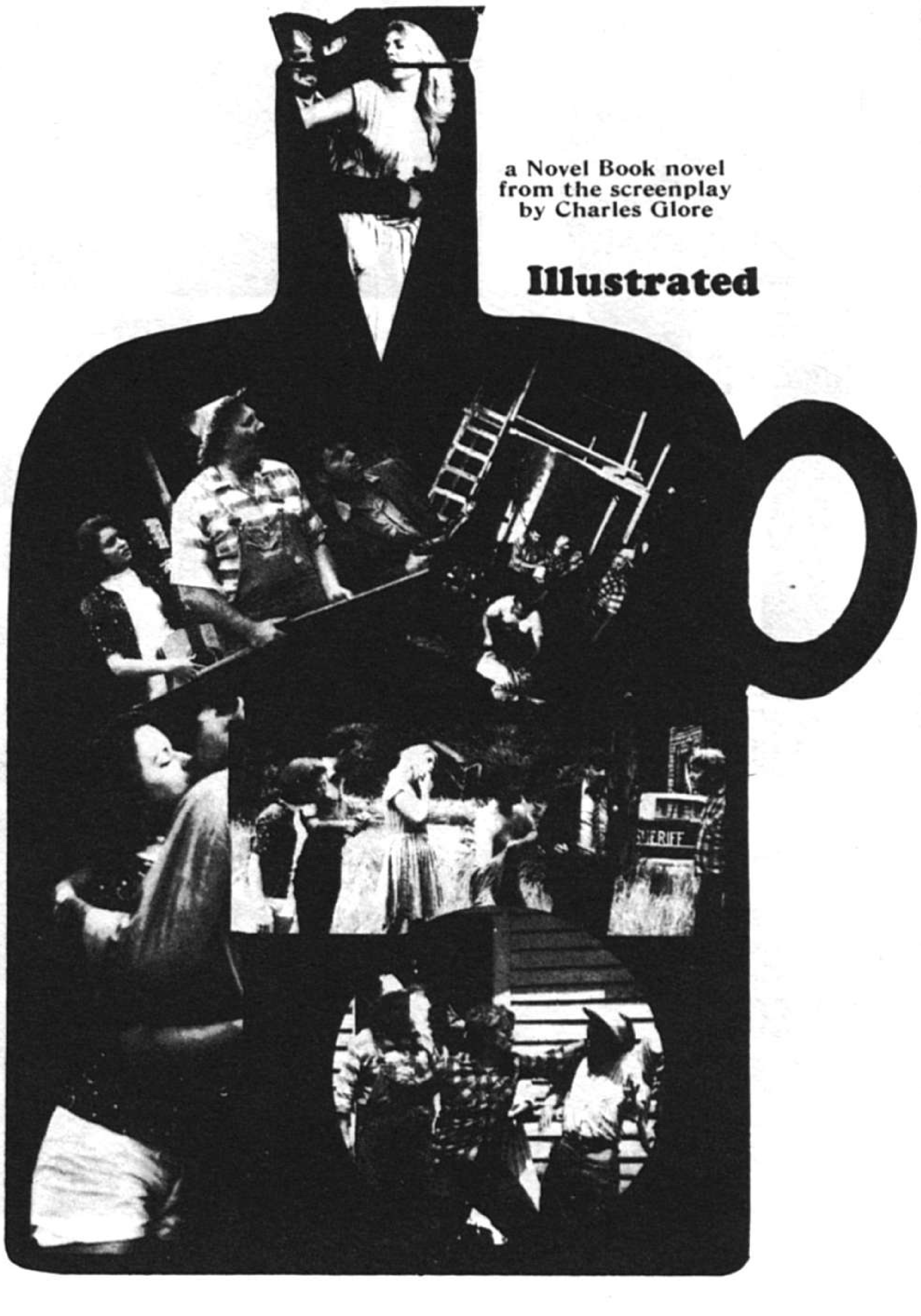
Doug takes Laura as his bride and offers the gift of electricity to his new backwoods in-laws, thus providing a happy, upbeat ending for the first Herschell G. Lewis family picture.

Lewis had successfully tempered the sexual element in *Moonshine Mountain,* but he had failed to sufficiently restrain his penchant for gory scenes and special effects. This led to an interesting incident

3



2



a Novel Book novel
from the screenplay
by Charles Glore

**Illustrated**

2 **Herschell's vision of American Gothic. Doug Martin (Chuck Scott, a.k.a. Charles Glore, author of the screenplay, right) first confronts the suspicious Carpenter clan.**

3 **The slow-witted Luther (Harry Hoffman) dumps the dead body of a revenue agent into the moonshine still. Is this what gives White Lightnin' its legendary kick?**

4 **Sheriff Potter flies into a rage when Della calls him "half a man" in *Moonshine Mountain.***

5 **The Carpenter clan entertains a neighbor on their front porch. I doubt that any Hollywood set designer could have produced as authentically ramshackle a piece of property as this "found setting." Left to right: Hutto (Pat Patterson), Mary Lou (Gretchen Eisner), Raf (Ben Moore), Jeb (Jeffrey Allen) and Ed Basham (Mark Douglas).**

4

5

which Herschell related to me of self-imposed post-production censorship.

Herschell was premiering the recently completed picture in a southern drive-in when he became alarmed by the sight of the large number of very small children parents were bringing into the theatre. Fearing that what was merely macabre fun and games to him might have a negative effect on these impressionable young minds, he performed projection room surgery on his brand new print just minutes before show time. He removed the worst of the gore effects as well as an entire sequence depicting several characters removing the boots from a freshly buried corpse. Leaving the theatre with a clear conscience, Lewis then packed up his equipment and returned to his ad agency in Chicago. And *Moonshine Mountain* continued to play throughout the south with great success.

# CHAPTER SIX

★ MONSTER A GO-GO ★ SIN, SUFFER, AND REPENT ★
★ AN EYE FOR AN EYE ★ JIMMY, THE BOY WONDER ★
★ (SANTA VISITS) THE MAGIC LAND OF MOTHER GOOSE ★
★ ALLEY TRAMP ★ SOMETHING WEIRD ★

# Mixed bag

**This chapter will concern itself with minor works that for one reason or another do not fit into the main body of the Lewis canon. Included are films made for or in collaboration with others, one-shot oddities, and works about which little or nothing is known, some of which may have literally become lost films. We will begin with the Lewis "camp classic" *Monster A Go-Go.***

*Monster A Go-Go* began as a science-fiction/horror film produced and directed by Bill Rebane under the working title *Terror at Halfday.* Rebane, a relative amateur at the time, managed to run out of money with his film only two-thirds completed. Enter Herschell Lewis, who purchased the unfinished film from Rebane and by shooting a minimum of transitional scenes and insert shots of notes and letters being looked at by the characters brought the pieces together into a completed picture. Lewis then added a satirically absurd narration and released the film as *Monster A Go-Go.*

The film is about an American astronaut who returns from deep space transformed into a ten-foot-high monster portrayed by tall man Henry "Horace" Hite. Herschell penned an ad campaign for *Monster* that actually sold the film by emphasizing its laughable shortcomings. "How did a 10-foot-tall monster get into that little bitty space capsule?" one ad read. And "You've never seen a picture like this—thank goodness!" said another. The film, released on a double bill with *Moonshine Mountain,* made back its cost.

*Sin, Suffer, and Repent* was another film bought, modified and re-released by Lewis. It was originally a British roadshow picture concerning the perils of venereal disease. Sensing that this theme was no longer box office, Herschell re-edited the film and added new scenes and narration which succeeded in changing the heroine's problem from one of infection to *pregnancy.* This allowed him to add a new exploitation gimmick: showing scenes of the actual birth of a baby on screen.

Shot in Chicago, *An Eye for an Eye* is a science-fiction picture starring Lewis regulars Bill Kerwin (Thomas Wood) and Otto Schlesinger. Its plot revolves around the experiences of a blind man (Kerwin) who is given a dead man's eyes. This operation not only helps to restore his sight but gives him extra-sensory perception as well. According to Herschell, the plot, which has been much used by others since, was original at the time.

Locations for the picture included laboratories at Roosevelt University and the Illinois Institute of Technology. When the film was finished, Lewis turned it over to a group of investors headed by Sidney J. Reich (pronounced Reech), who had served as executive producer on several of Lewis' previous pictures. But *An Eye for an Eye* was never released.

We now come to *Jimmy, the Boy*

something
WEIRD comes
to haunt you...

HIS ADVENTURE
INTO THE UNKNOWN
CATAPULTED
HIS MIND AND BODY
INTO

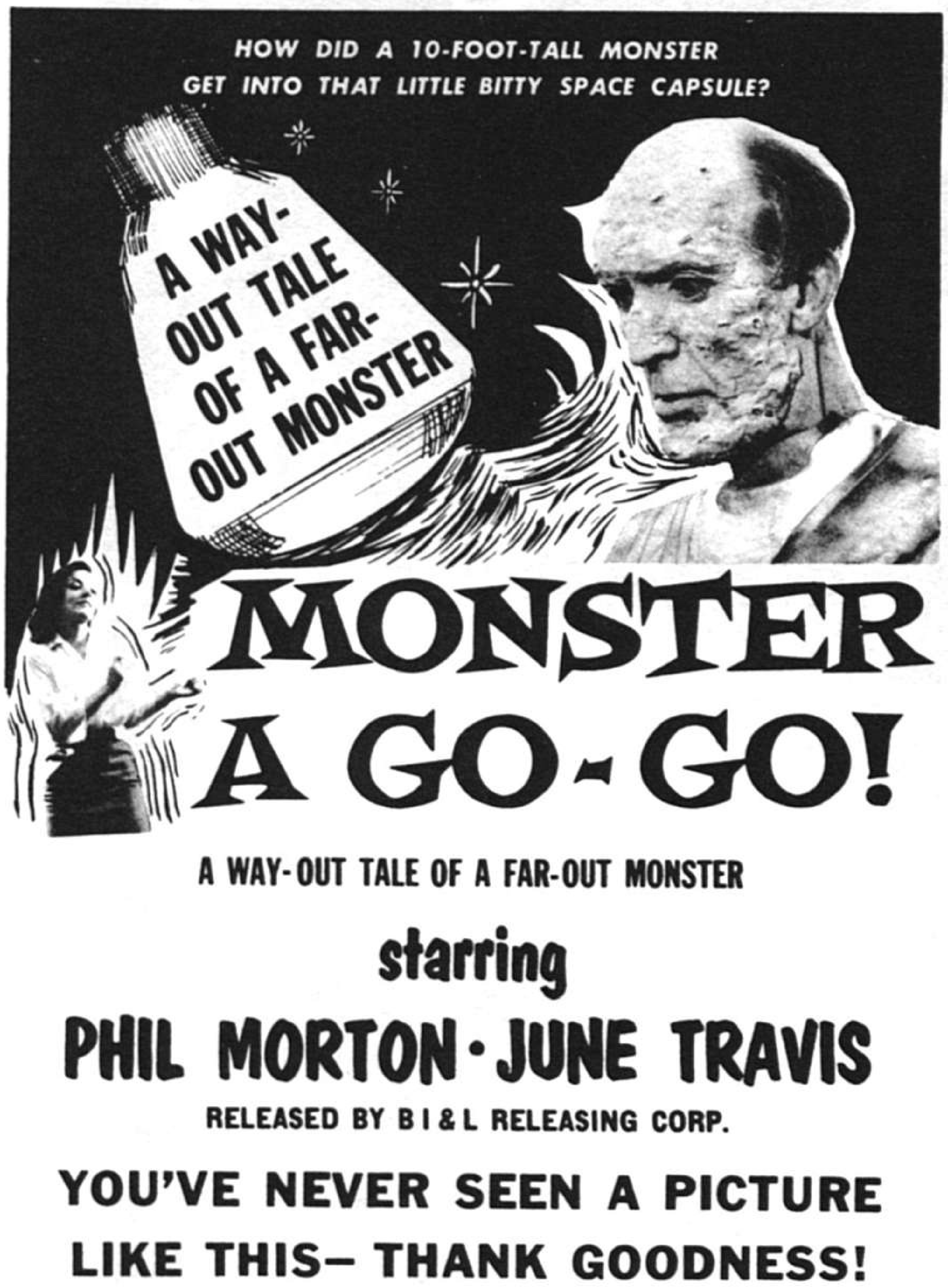
# SOMETHING WEIRD

IN STARTLING COLOR

a boiling, bizarre tale
of a mad love
that crashes through
the supernatural!

Haunted by a witch's ghastly brew,
thunderstruck at his own powers,
he crossed the astonishing border
of the twilight universe and found
debauchery and death his bloodthirsty partners!

starring
TONY McCABE ELIZABETH LEE
WILLIAM BROOKER MUDITE ARUMS
with
TED HEIL LAWRENCE J. ABERWOOD
STAN DALE IONE



HOW DID A 10-FOOT-TALL MONSTER
GET INTO THAT LITTLE BITTY SPACE CAPSULE?

A WAY-OUT TALE OF A FAR-OUT MONSTER

**MONSTER A GO-GO!**

A WAY-OUT TALE OF A FAR-OUT MONSTER

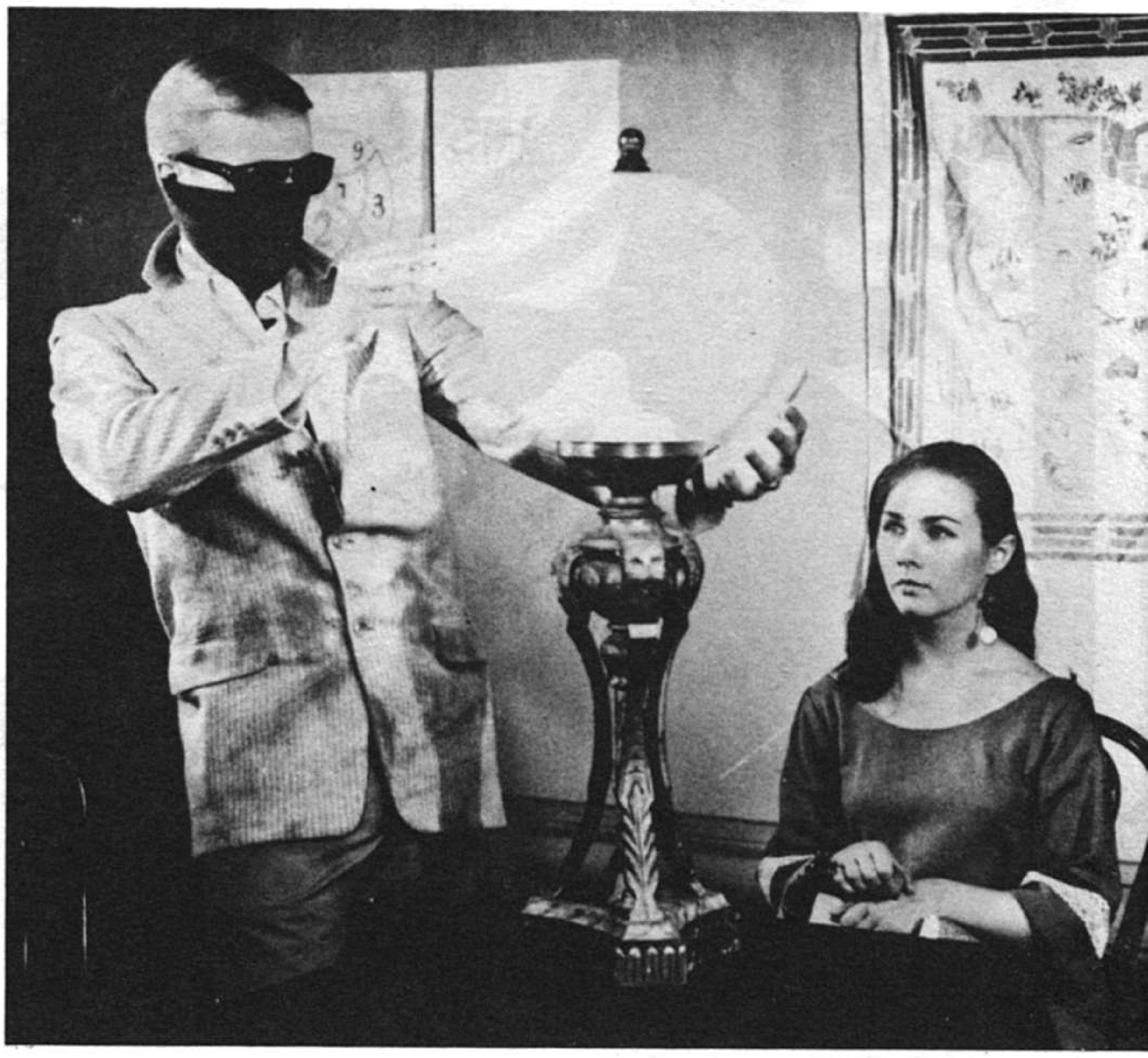
starring

**PHIL MORTON · JUNE TRAVIS**

RELEASED BY B I & L RELEASING CORP.

**YOU'VE NEVER SEEN A PICTURE LIKE THIS– THANK GOODNESS!**

1



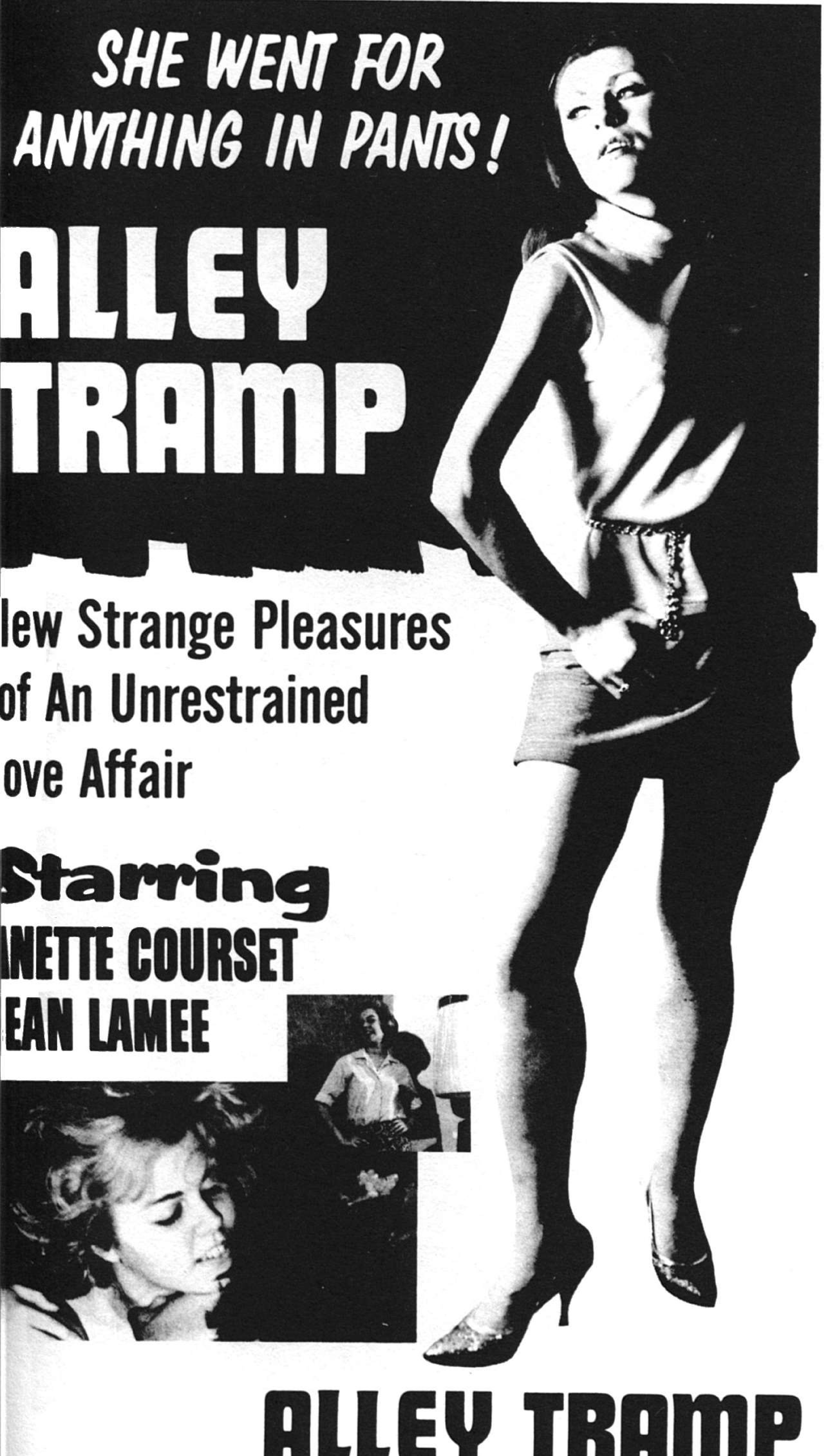
2

*Wonder* and *(Santa Visits) The Magic Land of Mother Goose*. Did Herschell Gordon Lewis, the infamous Wizard of Gore, really produce children's films? Well, yes and no. *Jimmy* was made for producer Hal Berg and *Mother Goose* for producer J. Edwin Baker, both for a flat fee. They were not strictly speaking Lewis films. But he did make them.

*Jimmy, the Boy Wonder* is about a boy who is magically released from the tedium of school when time is stopped. Jimmy must save the day by determining the cause of this potentially perilous phenomenon. Was the perpetrator an absent-minded astronomer possessed of unusual talents, or was it the malevolent Mr. Fig, the Time Killer? Along the way he encounters a magic clock of time and is even involved in a mad chase to "World's End." At the conclusion, Jimmy succeeds in un-stopping time; everything returns to normal.

No information exists about the plot

3



**1 Cronin Mitchell (Tony McCabe) plies his trade as a masked, skid-row fortune teller after he has been facially disfigured in a power line accident. From *Something Weird* (1967).**

**2 Crew member and amateur stuntman Bobby Vercruse takes a fall off a power pole doubling for Tony McCabe in the opening of *Something Weird.***

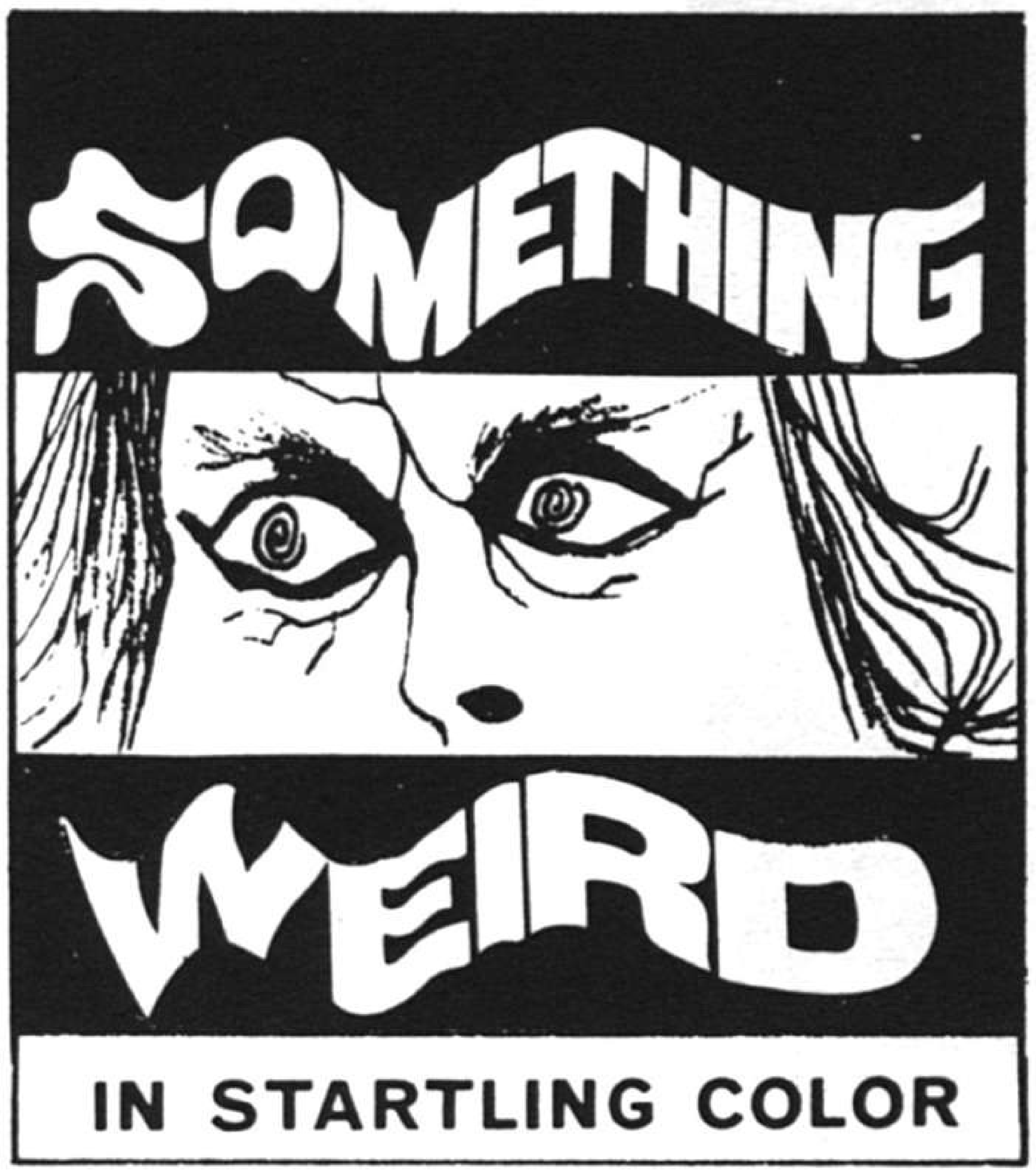
**3 This lovely apparition haunts a funeral parlor in *Something Weird.* The ghost effect was produced in-camera by shooting one scene, rolling back the film, then shooting the ghost.**

of *Mother Goose*. One can only deduce from its title what the film, now apparently lost, was about.

*Alley Tramp*, released in 1966, was a one-shot nudie made by Lewis in black and white for nudie theatre owner Tom Dowd, who wanted to own the product shown in his theatres as well as be able to sell it to other exhibitors. It has also been shown around the country under different titles, including *I Am a Woman, Pleasure Me, Master,* and *Phillip and Marie*. This last title was used to cause audiences to confuse it with the popular legitimate film *David and Lisa*.

Shot on an incredibly low budget in only two or three days, *Alley Tramp* tells the unbelievably sordid story of sixteen-year-old Marie, who, after seeing her parents in bed together "doing it," embarks on a torrid affair with her slightly older cousin, Phillip. When she catches her mother with an illicit lover, Marie goes to bed with him as well, then turns into a

4 **Elizabeth Lee as the ugly witch.**



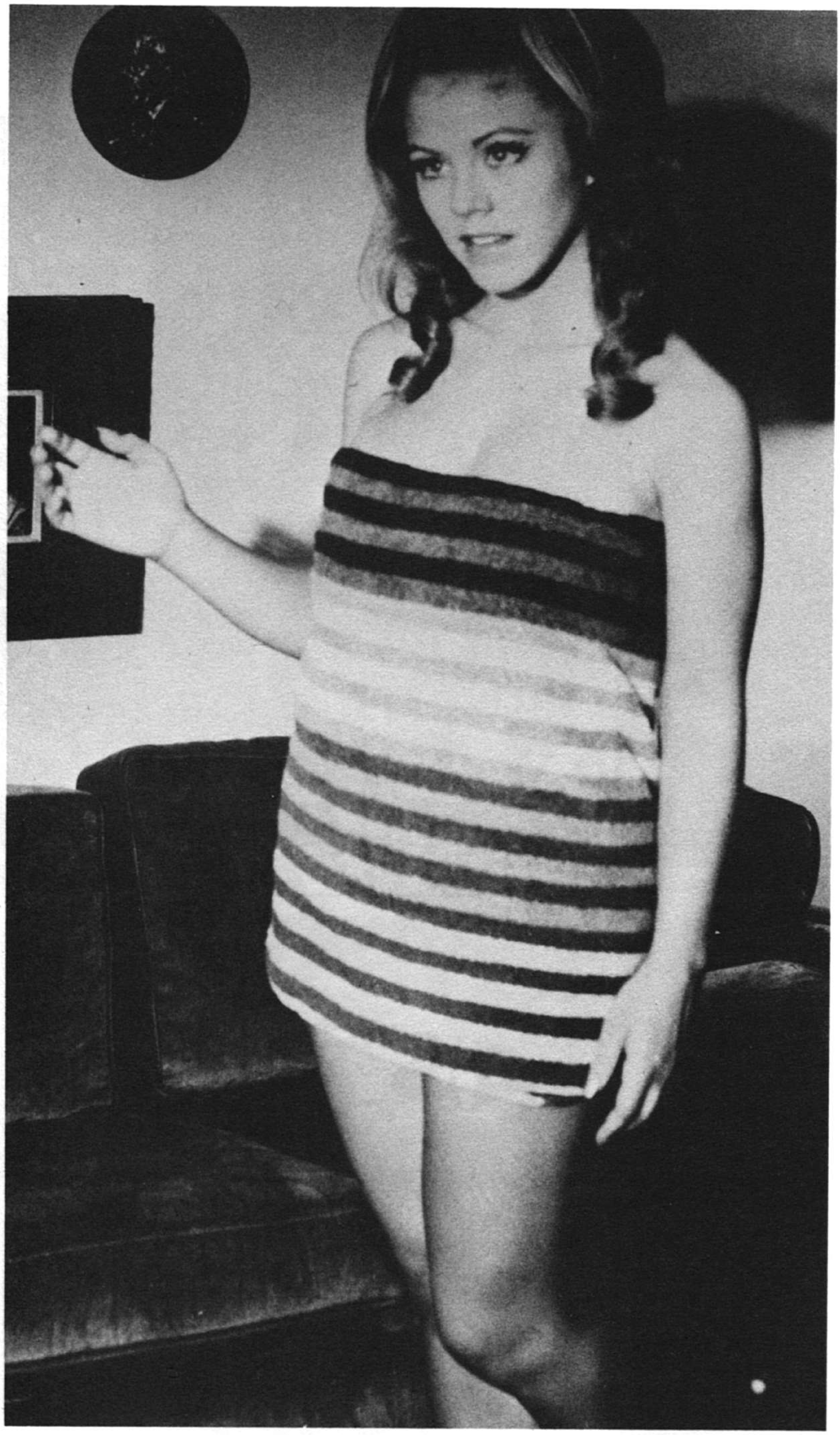
nymphomaniac. Because of her promiscuity, she becomes pregnant, has an abortion, almost dies, but recovers in a hospital where she then proceeds to rape an intern. Finally, she is put in a sanitarium for observation. Nice life!

The last film in this decidedly "mixed bag" is *Something Weird* . . . which it certainly is! Written and produced by James F. Hurley, a college teacher, karate buff and former associate of psychic Peter Hurkos, the film was photographed and directed by Lewis in "Startling Color." Here's the plot, so hang on tight:

Cronin Mitchell, an electrical engineer, is accidentally burned by a loose high tension wire. He recovers to learn some good news and some bad. The good news: he now has the extra-sensory power to read minds and move objects. The bad news: his facial burns will leave him hideously scarred for life.

Becoming a masked, skid-row fortune teller (what else?), Mitchell is visited by

5



5 **Elizabeth Lee as the beautiful witch.**

an ugly witch, who makes him a deal: she will restore his face if he becomes her lover. He thinks her to be a crank, but agrees. When he looks in the mirror, his scars have vanished.

Mitchell then meets pretty Ellen Parker at a night club and wins her affections with his handsome new face. He is puzzled, however, by the fact that he cannot read her mind. He finds out why when she reveals herself to be the witch who restored his features. She then demands that he fulfill his side of the bargain, and they become lovers.

With the beautiful Ellen always by his side, Mitchell pursues his career as a psychic; his fame grows through speaking tours and television appearances. Finally he is called upon to assist the police in solving a series of crimes in a small midwestern town. Arriving in town at the same time Mitchell does is Dr. Alex Jordan, a brilliant ESP expert and playboy (what a combination!). Jordan has been sent

6 **A hospital nurse is repelled by the face of Cronin Mitchell.**

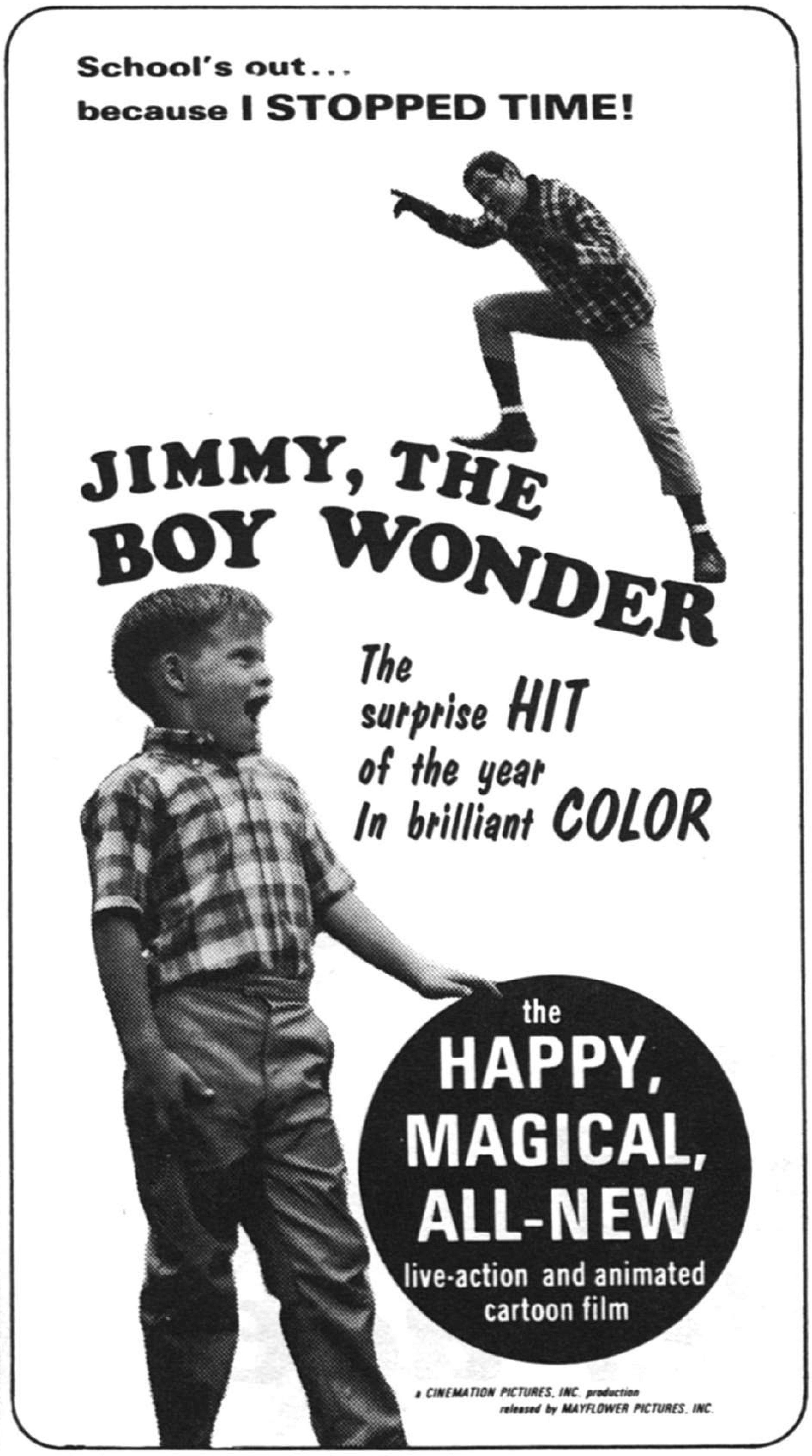
6

by the government to observe Mitchell in order to determine if his powers are real. Jordan spots Ellen and immediately gets hot pants for her. Despite her warnings to him that she will remain tied to Mitchell until his death, Jordan persists. Ellen magically summons Mitchell, who causes Jordan's bedclothes to attack him. But Jordan fights back, escaping his animated sheets and pillowcases.

Using his powers, Mitchell discovers that the perpetrator of the crimes he has been called in to solve is none other than police detective Maddox. He also predicts that Maddox will try to kill him. In his lust for Ellen, Jordan allows Maddox to kill Mitchell, then he kills Maddox.

Jordan then vows his love for Ellen, who immediately sends him packing by giving him a look at her witchy, hideous self. Controlled by her magic, he falls on a smudge pot burning at an excavation. His face horribly burned, Jordan assumes the role of Mitchell, and Ellen then pro-

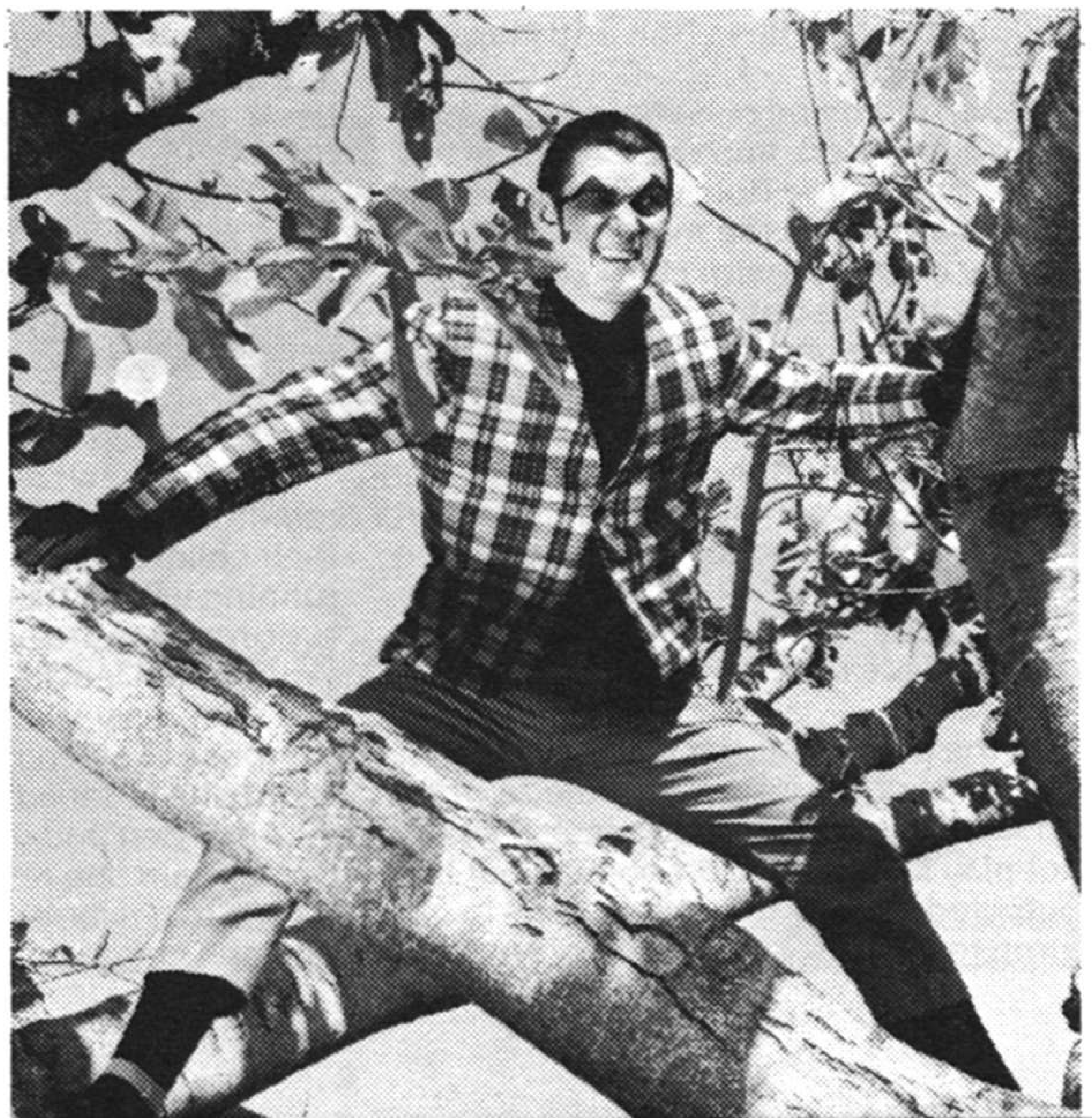
MONSTER
A GO-GO!


School's out...
because I STOPPED TIME!
JIMMY, THE BOY WONDER
The surprise HIT of the year In brilliant COLOR
the HAPPY, MAGICAL, ALL-NEW live-action and animated cartoon film
a CINEMATION PICTURES, INC. production
released by MAYFLOWER PICTURES, INC.

7, 8 ***Jimmy, The Boy Wonder* (1966).**

7

8



ceeds to offer him the same bargain. And so it goes.

Now, *that's* something weird!

★ SUBURBAN ROULETTE ★
★ THE GIRL, THE BODY, AND THE PILL ★
★ BLAST-OFF GIRLS ★ HOW TO MAKE A DOLL ★

# CHAPTER SEVEN

# Sex and sin in suburbia, show biz and the computer age

**During 1966 and 1967, Herschell Lewis produced a series of four soft core sex pictures. They contained no actual nudity, and although several of them dealt with women who become "PG," the films themselves would no doubt get a "GP" rating by the standards of today. They were designed to exploit the latest social issues connected with sex—wife-swapping, the pill, abortion, etc.—and often accented the comic elements inherent in some of these issues.**

*Suburban Roulette* is Lewis' wife-swapping picture, the first to be produced by David Chudnow under a partnership called Argent Film Productions. Argent is French for money.

The film tells the story of Bert and Ilene Fisher who, with their daughter Cindy, move into what they think is a staid, respectable suburban neighborhood. The newcomers are invited to a party hosted by Martin and Fran Conley, who have four boys. There the Fishers meet another couple, the childless Ron and Margo Elston.

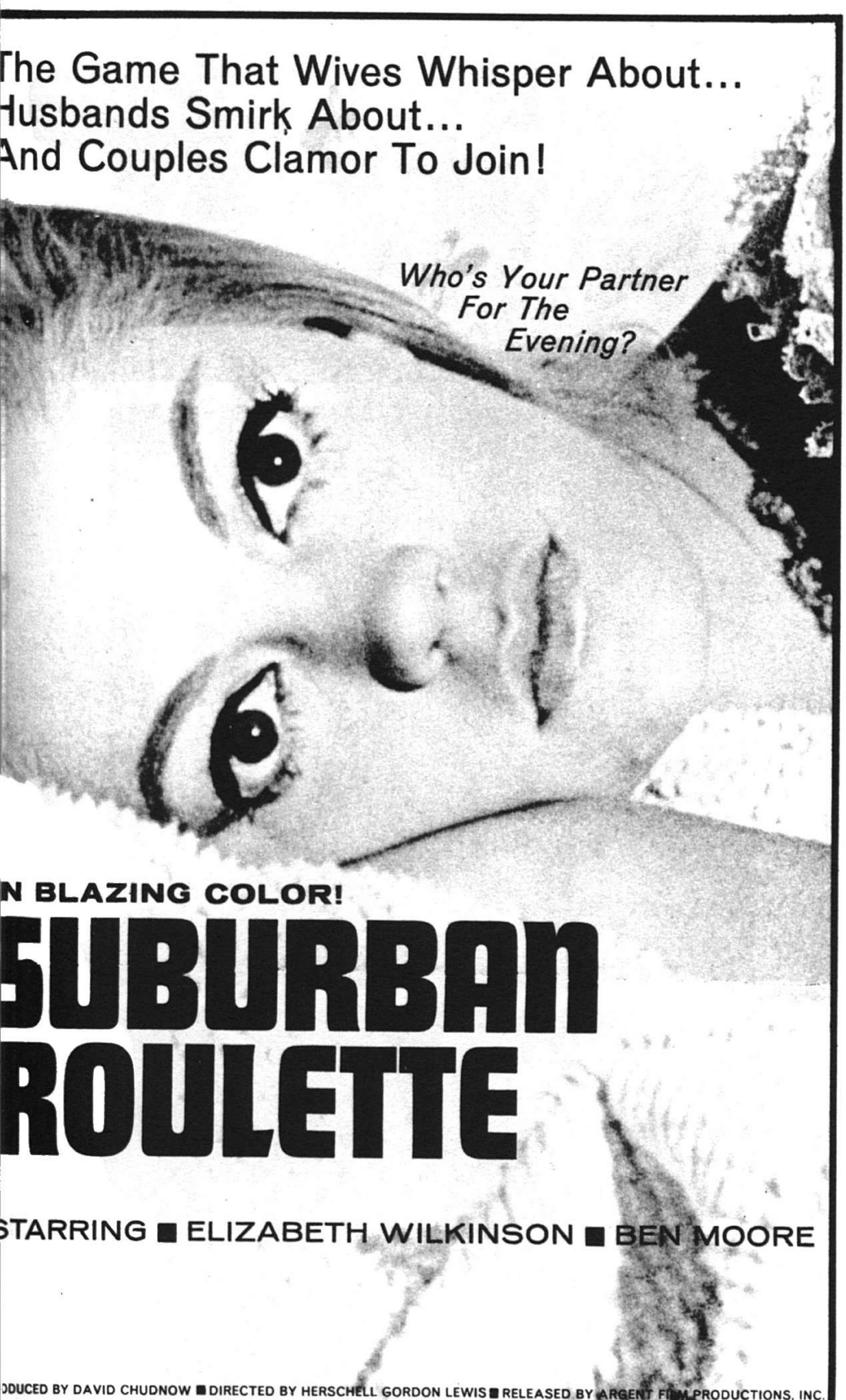
Ilene, bored and dissatisfied with her marriage to Bert, finds herself attracted to the handsome Ron, who appears to dig her as well. In the meantime, Martin Conley decamps with Margo Elston, leaving the frustrated Bert and Fran to drink themselves into a stupor. Later Ron seduces Ilene and takes her to bed.

At party's end (some party!), Ilene helps her thoroughly smashed husband home, whereupon he immediately starts berating her about her promiscuity. The three couples continue to associate on a regular basis, however, even though Bert is aware of his wife's infidelities with Ron.

At the next party, the jaded Martin Conley brings out a small roulette wheel. "Instead of money," he suggests, "why not play for flesh?" Bert objects but is outvoted and the group proceeds to jump to an even higher level of sordid sexuality. Accusing the others of acting like animals, Bert tries to get Ilene to leave, but she refuses, believing that Ron intends to divorce Margo and run off with her. Ron, however, shoves Ilene away, announcing that his attraction to her is merely physical; he really wants no part of her. Furious, Bert attacks Ron to protect his wife's "honor," but he is soundly beaten by Ron. The fight is stopped when Conley intervenes.

Shocked back to reality, the Conleys reunite and vow to spend more time with their children, who have literally been running wild in their absence. Ron, however, manages to seduce Ilene one last time, which leaves her in a state of deep depression; she decides to take an overdose of sleeping pills.

But she is saved by the unexpected return of Bert and their daughter Cindy. Once again she resolves to recommit herself to her family, this time for good. Ron and Margo on the other hand set off


The Game That Wives Whisper About...
Husbands Smirk About...
And Couples Clamor To Join!
Who's Your Partner For The Evening?
N BLAZING COLOR!
SUBURBAN ROULETTE
STARRING ■ ELIZABETH WILKINSON ■ BEN MOORE
ODUCED BY DAVID CHUDNOW ■ DIRECTED BY HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS ■ RELEASED BY ARGENT FILM PRODUCTIONS, INC.

1

1 **Musical pairs at poolside in *Suburban Roulette* (1967).**

in search of new prey with whom to play their continuing game of *Suburban Roulette*.

Lewis' second soft core film, *The Girl, the Body, and the Pill,* concerns itself with the dual moral issues of the use of birth control pills and the need for high school sex education classes. The screenplay is by the versatile Allison Louise Downe, who had penned *Blood Feast* years before. Sidney J. Reich was executive producer for Creative Film Enterprises.

In it, a young, progressive high school teacher, Marcia Barrington, offers sex education classes to her students despite the objections of Mr. Price, the principal, and Wesley Nichols, a wealthy school board member. Eventually, they are able to force Marcia to discontinue the classes, but her students encourage her to hold them in the privacy of her own home. They even go to the extent of forging fake parental permission slips to push the idea over with Marcia.

2 **Playing for flesh.**

3 **"Why not play for flesh?" suggests Martin Conley (Thomas Wood, second from left) to his guests: Margo (Ione Rolnick), Bert (Ben Moore), Ilene (Elizabeth Wilkinson), Ron (Tony McCabe), and his wife Fran (Vickie Miles). From *Suburban Roulette.***

4 **I don't know if Ilene Fisher (Elizabeth Wilkinson) is getting dressed or undressed in this scene from *Suburban Roulette* — then again, maybe neither does she.**

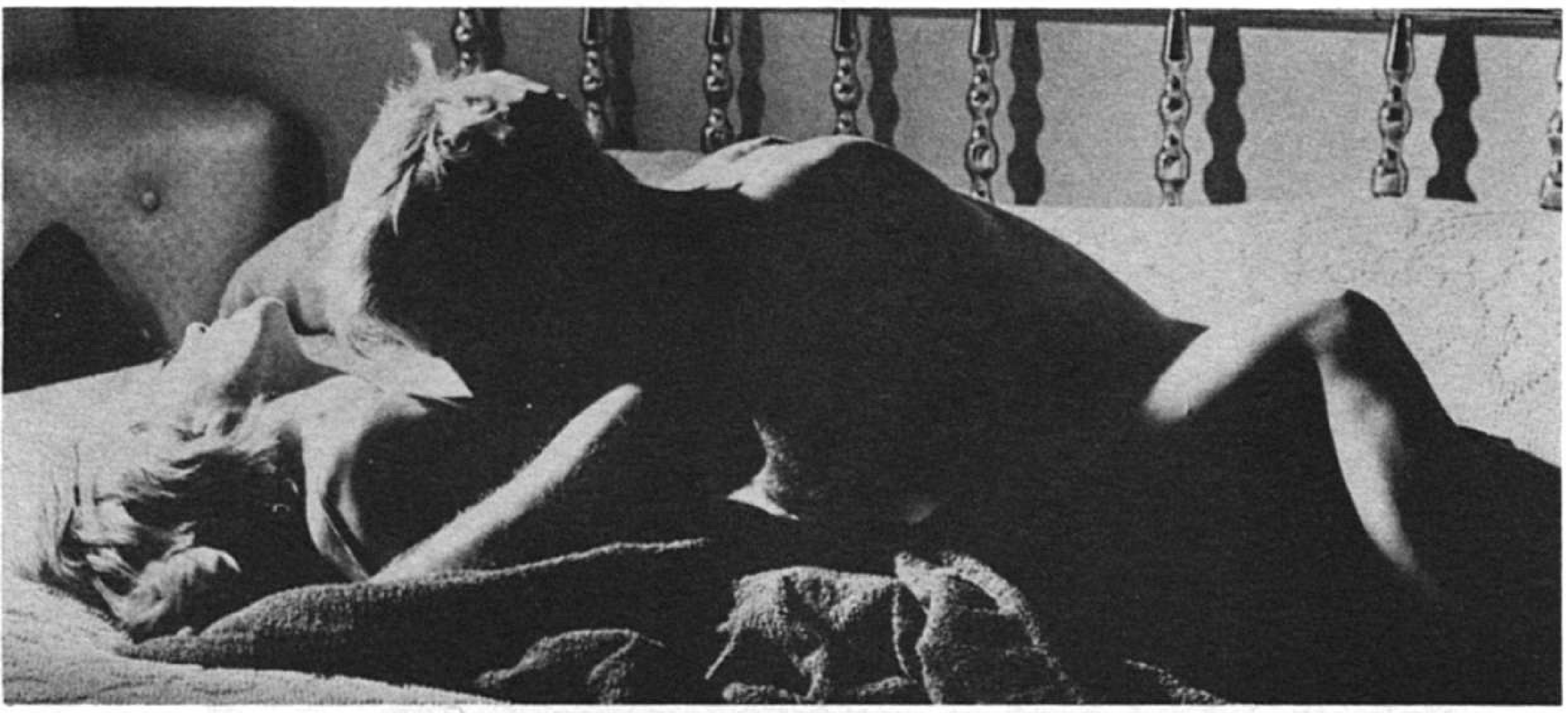
5 **A suggestion of latent lesbian action from *Suburban Roulette.* Vickie Miles is applying the lotion to Ione Rolnick.**

2

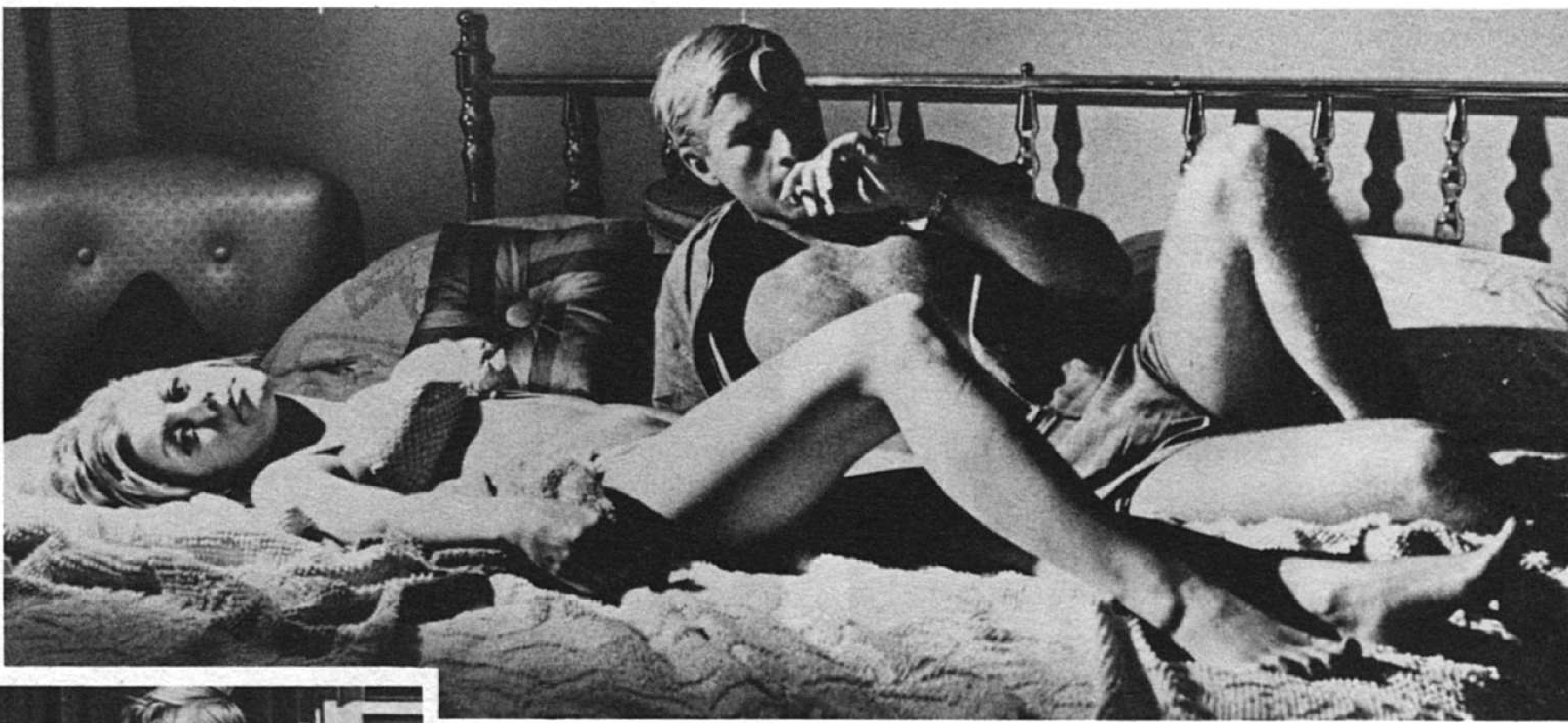
3

4

5

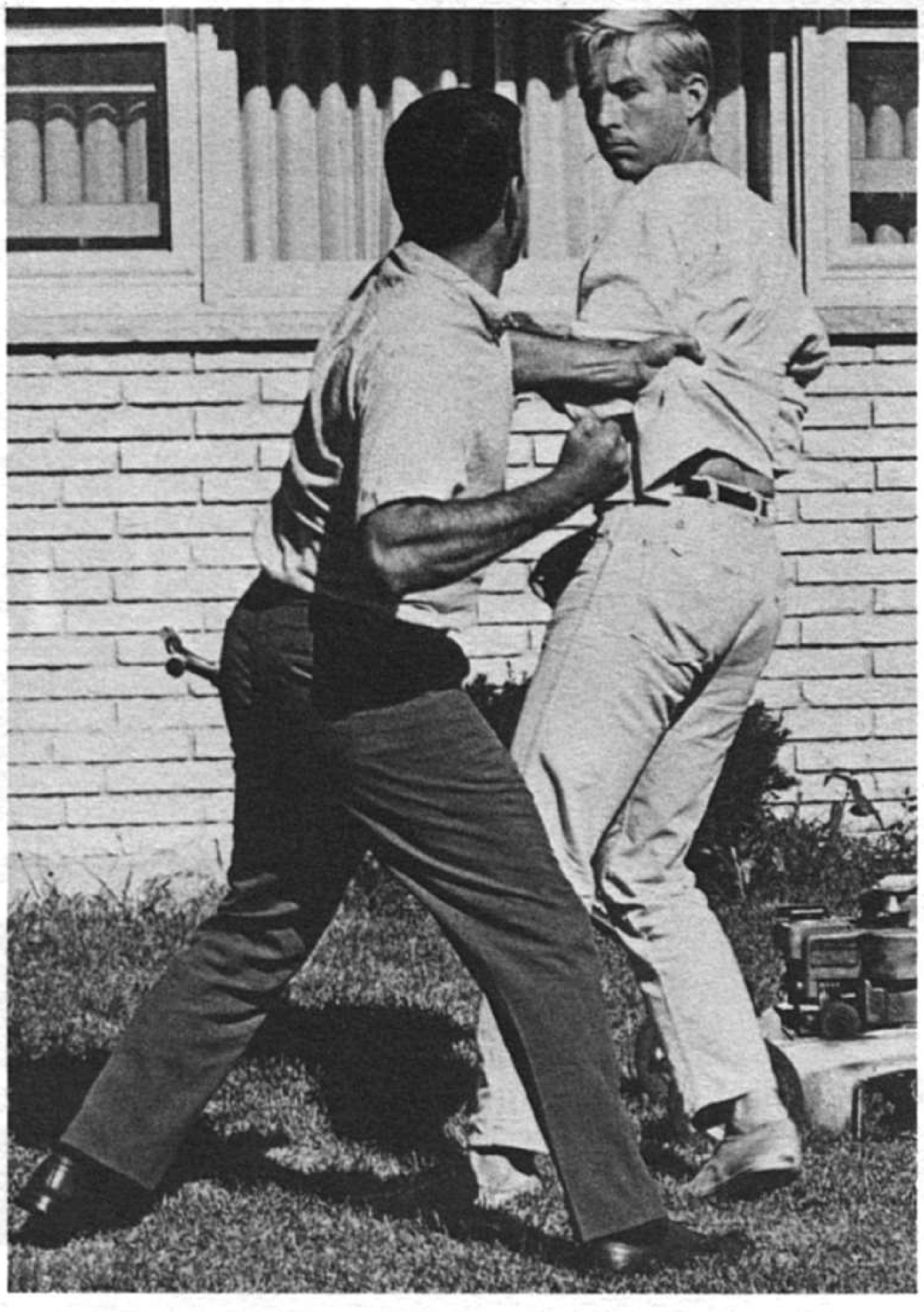


6



7

8



6 **Extramarital action from *Suburban Roulette.***

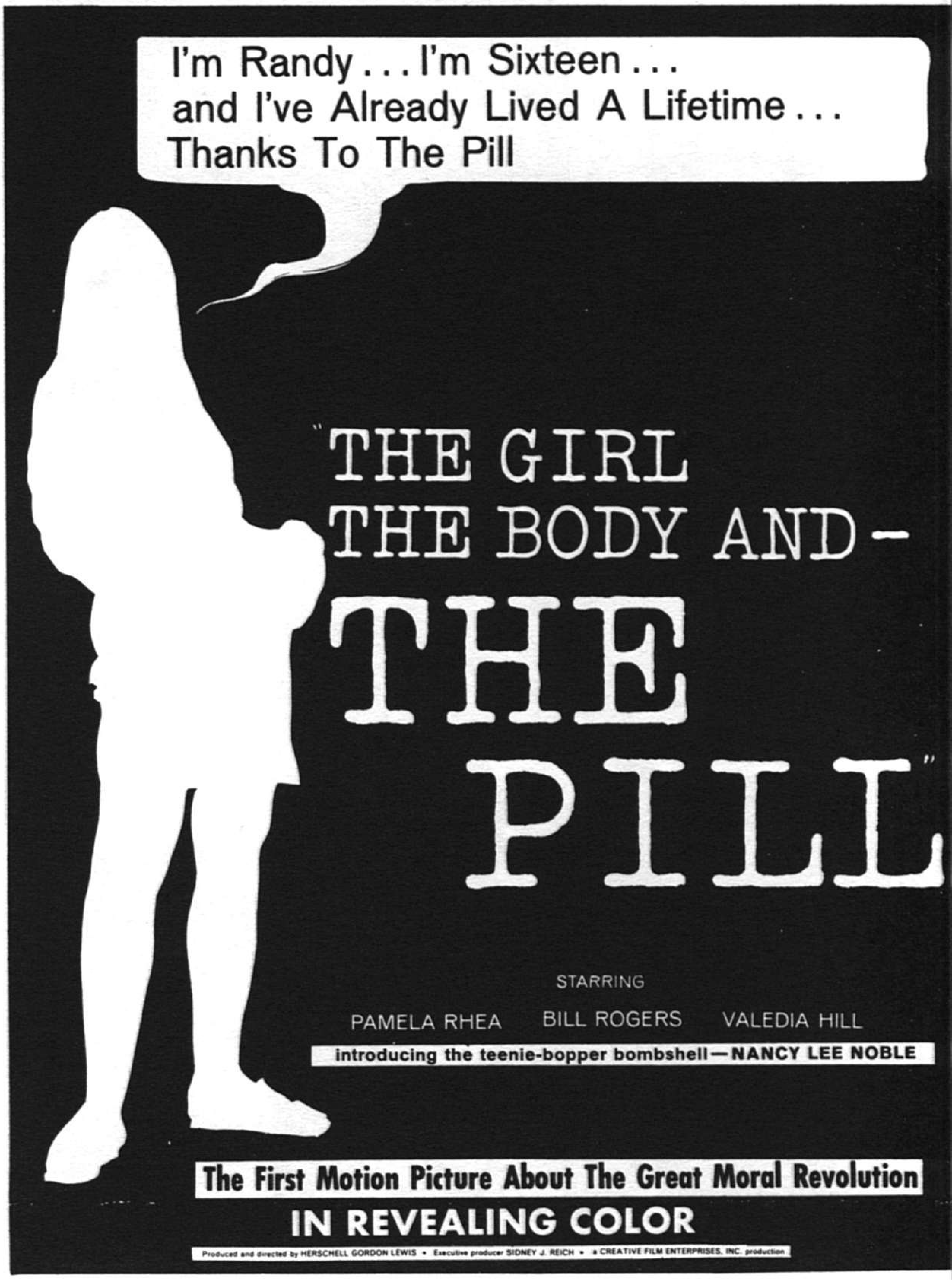
7 **Ron Elston (Tony McCabe) smokes the traditional aftersex cigarette; he's just made "love" to his neighbor's wife, Ilene (Elizabeth Wilkinson).**

8 **Bert Fisher (Ben Moore, left) attacks neighbor Ron Elston (Tony McCabe) because Ron is having an affair with his wife.**

Meanwhile, Randy Hunt, a promiscuous young teenager, lies to her mother that she spent the night at her friend Alice Nichols' home when, in fact, she's covering up for having had a wild night with a gang of local hot-to-trot hoods. When she checks on her daughter's story, Irene Hunt meets Alice's father face-to-face for the first time and falls for him. Because his married life is unsatisfactory, Wesley embarks on an affair with Irene. Unbeknownst to either of them, however, Randy has been stealing Irene's birth control pills and replacing them with saccharine tablets.

Alice Nichols, who has fallen for her classmate Ray Stanton, turns to her mother for help, knowing that her father will never allow her relationship with Ray to continue. But her mother proves ineffectual in persuading Wesley to let the sweethearts have their way. Marcia continues her home sex classes, which are attended by gang leader Pike Grover, 9 **An ambulance, provided gratis by local authorities, draws the curious who stay to watch the shooting. The result is a patented Lewis instant crowd scene of free extras from *Suburban Roulette.***

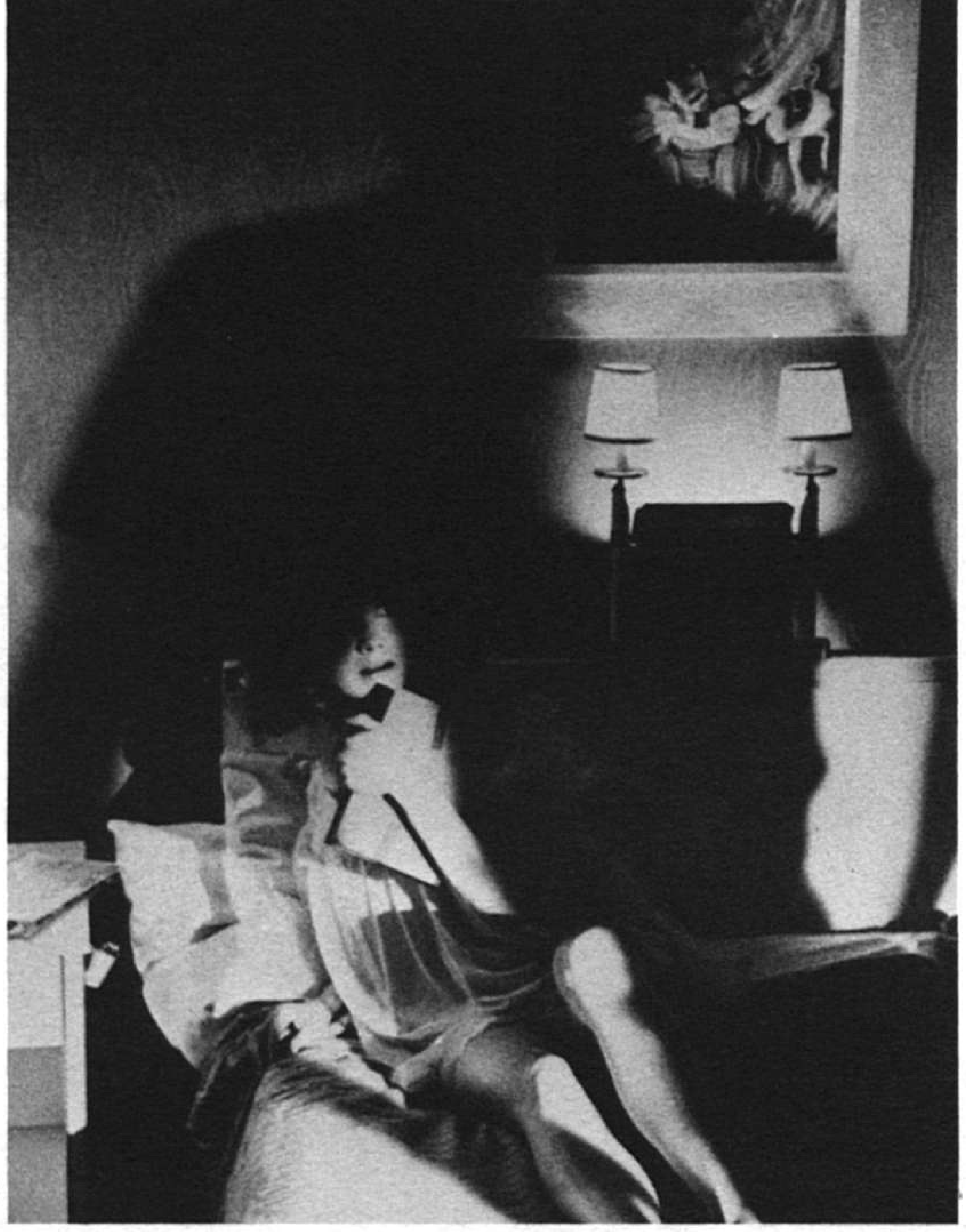
9


I'm Randy . . . I'm Sixteen . . .
and I've Already Lived A Lifetime . . .
Thanks To The Pill
"THE GIRL
THE BODY AND –
THE
PILL"
STARRING
PAMELA RHEA
BILL ROGERS
VALEDIA HILL
introducing the teenie-bopper bombshell—NANCY LEE NOBLE
The First Motion Picture About The Great Moral Revolution
IN REVEALING COLOR
Produced and directed by HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS • Executive producer SIDNEY J. REICH • a CREATIVE FILM ENTERPRISES, INC. production

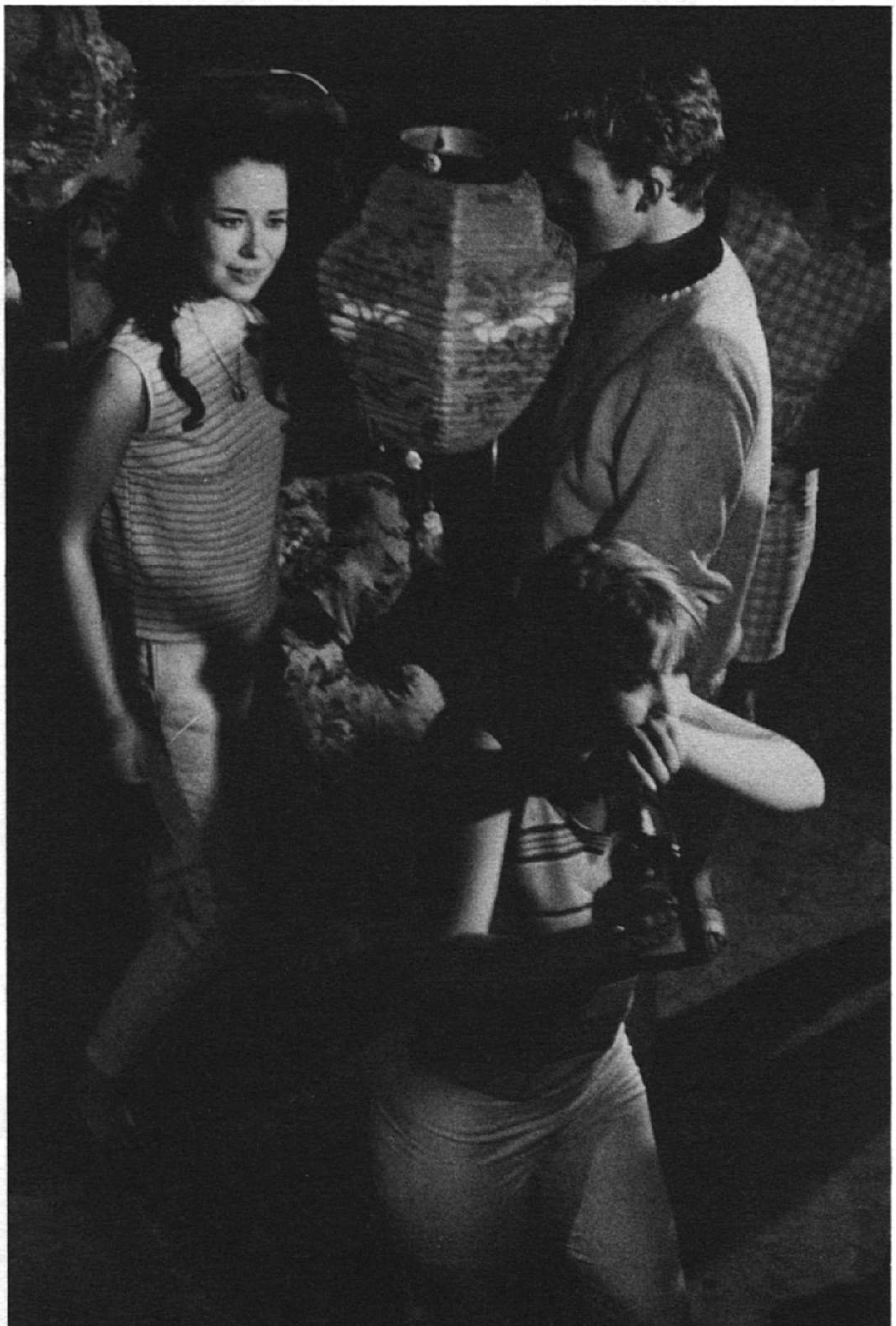
among other unsavories. Pike's dull mind associates sex only with his teacher; and so he sets out to rape Marcia at the first opportunity. Meanwhile, Ray, tired of sneaking dates with Alice under her father's nose, takes up with the loose-living Randy.

Attempting to reclaim Ray's affections, Alice goes to bed with him, ending up a sadder but wiser girl. Irene, however, discovers that she has been made pregnant by Nichols because of the theft of her pills by Randy. She is forced to avail herself of a "coathanger" abortionist. Pike Grover finally attacks Marcia in her own home, but she is saved by the quick appearance of her boyfriend.

Nichols, believing a phone call about the attack on Marcia to be about his affair with Irene, blurts out the truth to his wife, Grace, who realizes that she now wields the upper hand with her husband. Marcia marries her boyfriend, Irene and Randy grow closer as mother and daughter,



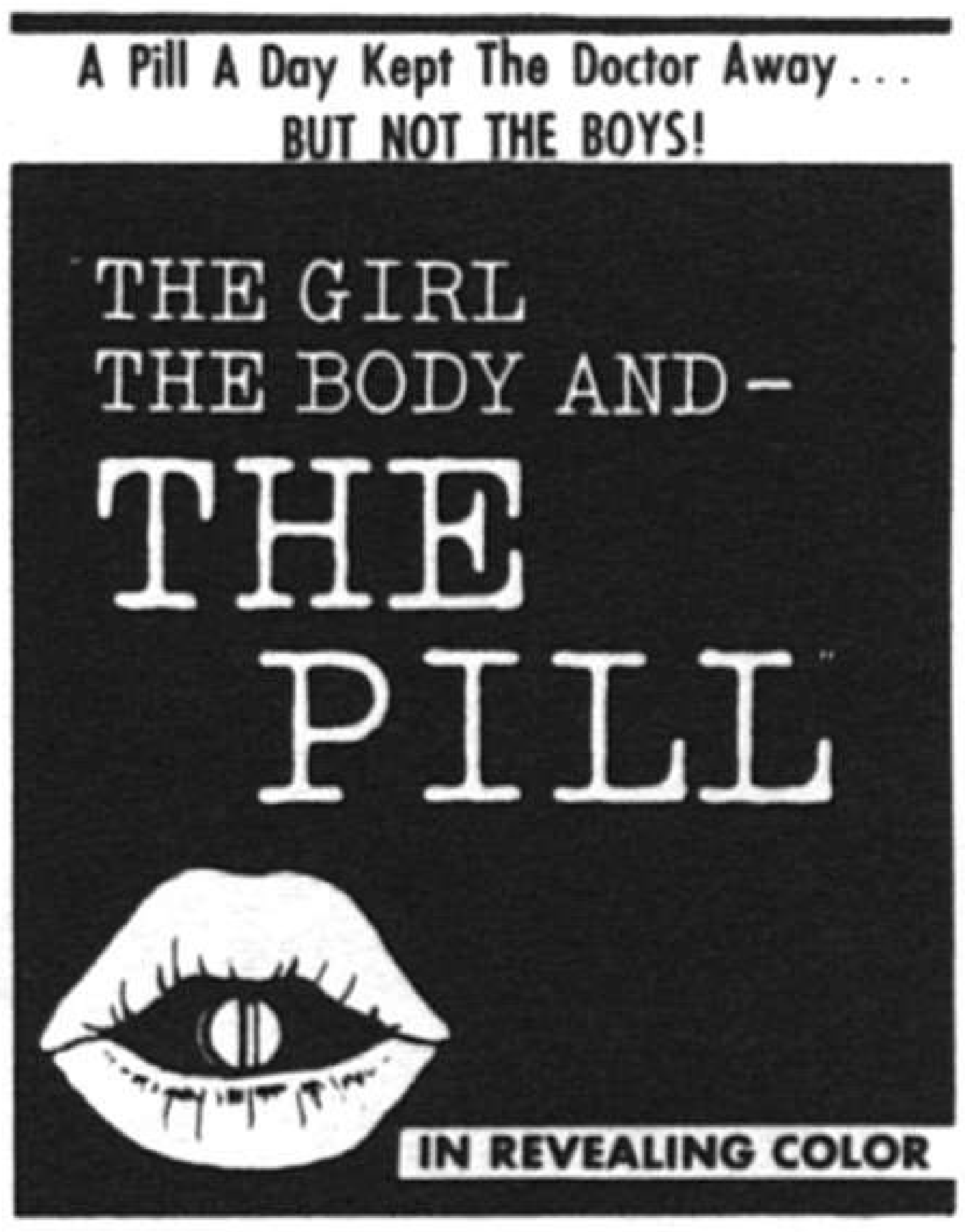
10



11

10 **High school sex education teacher Marcia Barrington (Pamela Rhea) is menaced by the shadow of Pike Grover (cameraman Roy Collodi), a student who intends to rape her.**

11 **Alice Nichols (Kay Ross, far left) expresses disapproval over the fact that liquor is being consumed at a teen party.**



Wesley and Grace rejuvenate their marriage, and Ray and Alice promise to wait until after graduation before thinking of wedding bells. In this Herschell Lewis production, the old Victorian morality is strictly observed.

*Blast-Off Girls* (1967) was Herschell's attempt to exploit the popularity of the Beatles movies, *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and *Help!* (1965). He directed from his own original screenplay. The film featured two Chicago area rock bands, the Faded Blue and Charlie, as well as the Blast-Off Girls themselves. There was also a special guest appearance by Colonel Harland Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken fame.

Perhaps this is as good a place as any to offer a brief digression about Herschell's menu for success. Herschell Gordon Lewis has had a life-long love affair with fried chicken. On many Lewis productions where he himself provided the food for the cast and crew by bartering with

**12 A member of The Faded Blue rock band (third from right) sticks out his tongue at a female critic while getting his hair done at the beauty parlor.**

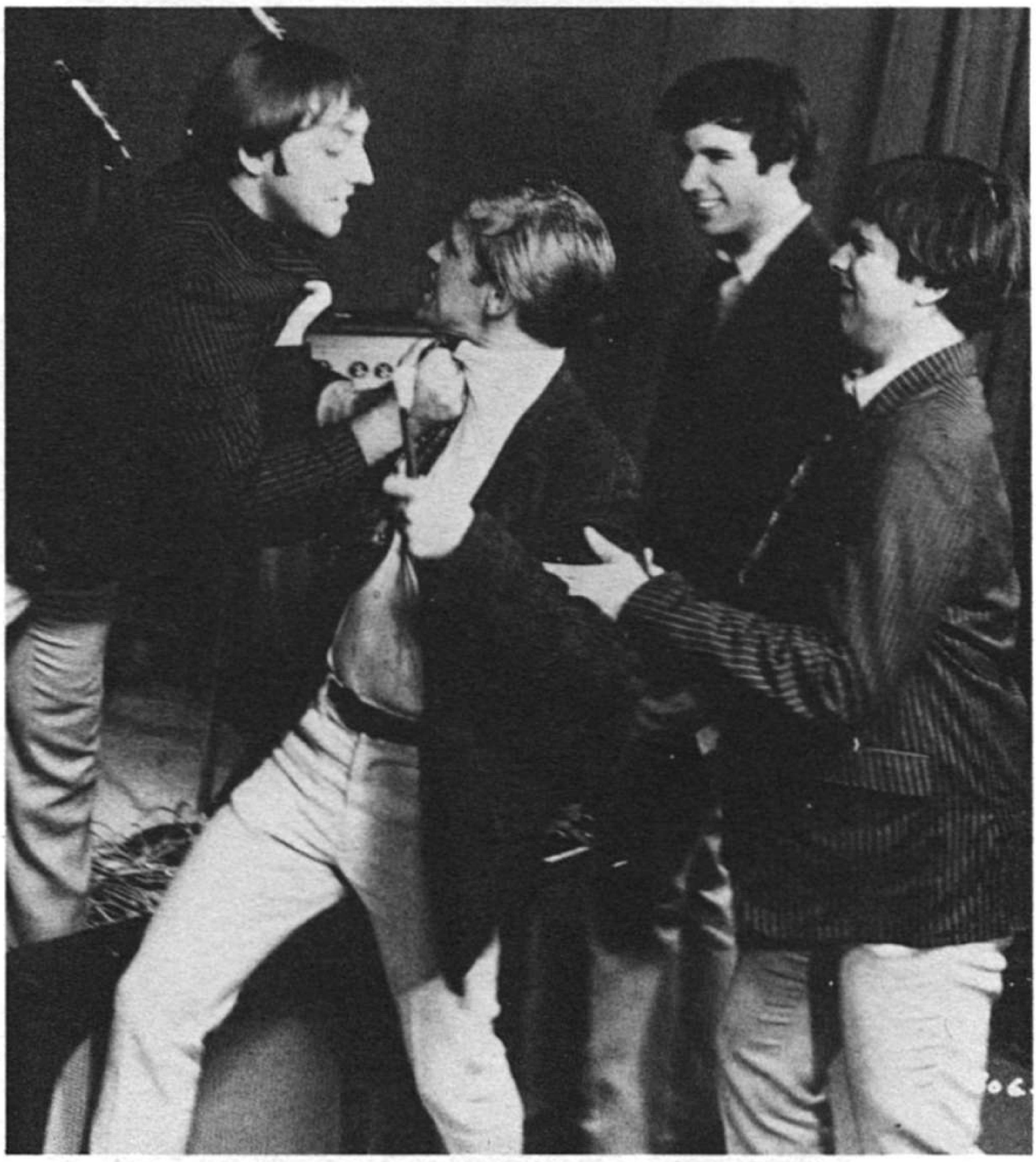
**13 Unscrupulous rock band manager Boojie Baker (Dan Conway) has money to burn as illustrated in this scene from *Blast-Off Girls* (1967) in which he lights his cigar with a bill of large denomination.**

**14 The Faded Blue attacks its crooked manager, Boojie Baker.**

**15 The Faded Blue takes the stage in Lewis' rock and roll epic, *Blast-Off Girls*.**

12

13



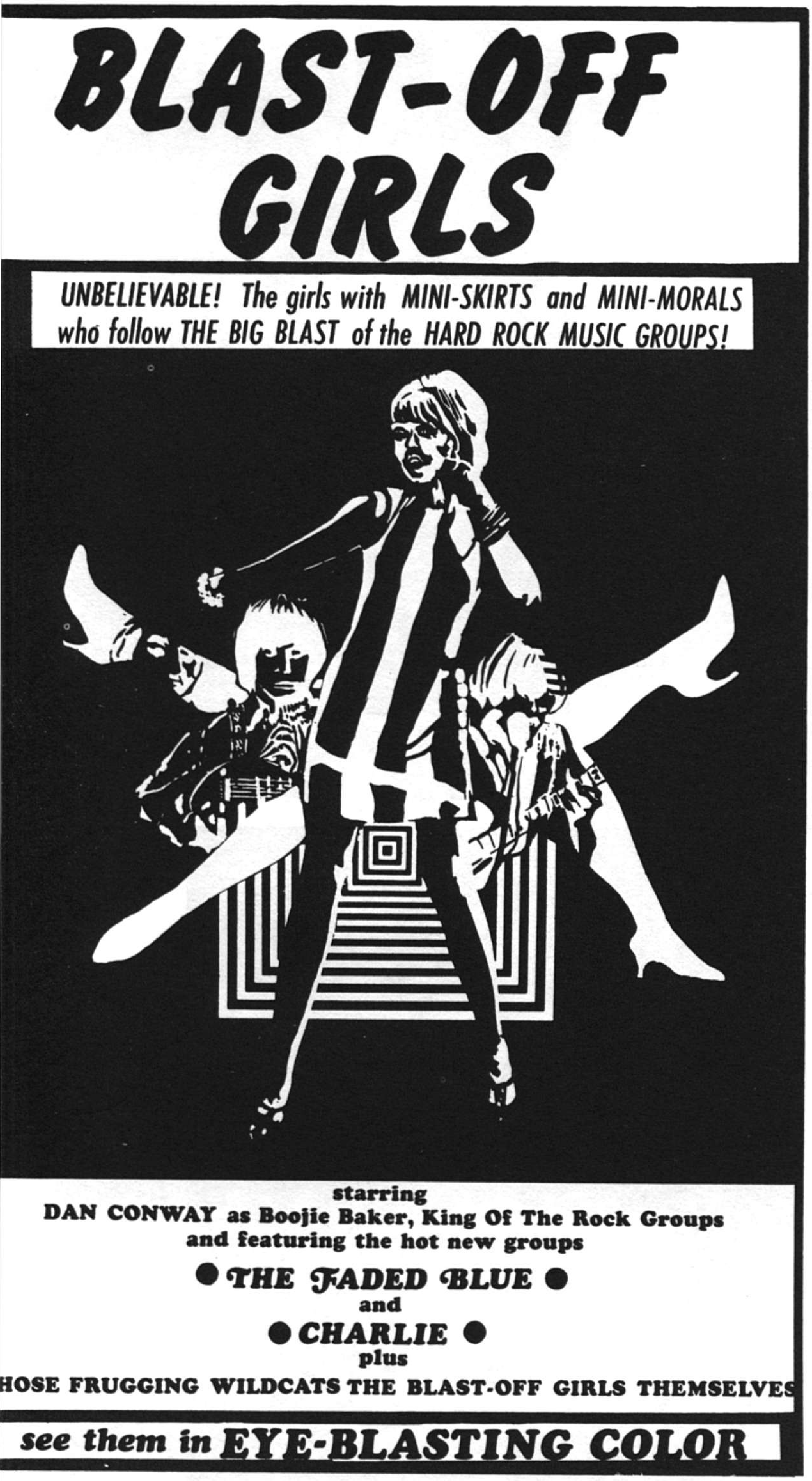
14

local restaurants, fried chicken was often the bill of fare each day of shooting. He would make a deal with a local franchise to cater the production in return for promoting the restaurant by having a shot of it in his film. Or he would give the owner a small part in his picture in return for the food. It would have been tough working on a Lewis film if you did not have a taste for fried chicken. Besides, one could hardly complain when the boss himself was chowing it down beside you each and every day.

Herschell was and still is very fond of Orange Julius as a beverage and frozen custard as a dessert. I humbly submit this information to his myriad of fans, who can now partake of the Official Herschell Gordon Lewis Meal prior to attending showings of his films. And now back to *Blast-Off Girls*.

This film is the saga of Boojie Baker, an unscrupulous manager of rock bands, who, at fade-in, is being given the heave-

15



# BLAST-OFF GIRLS

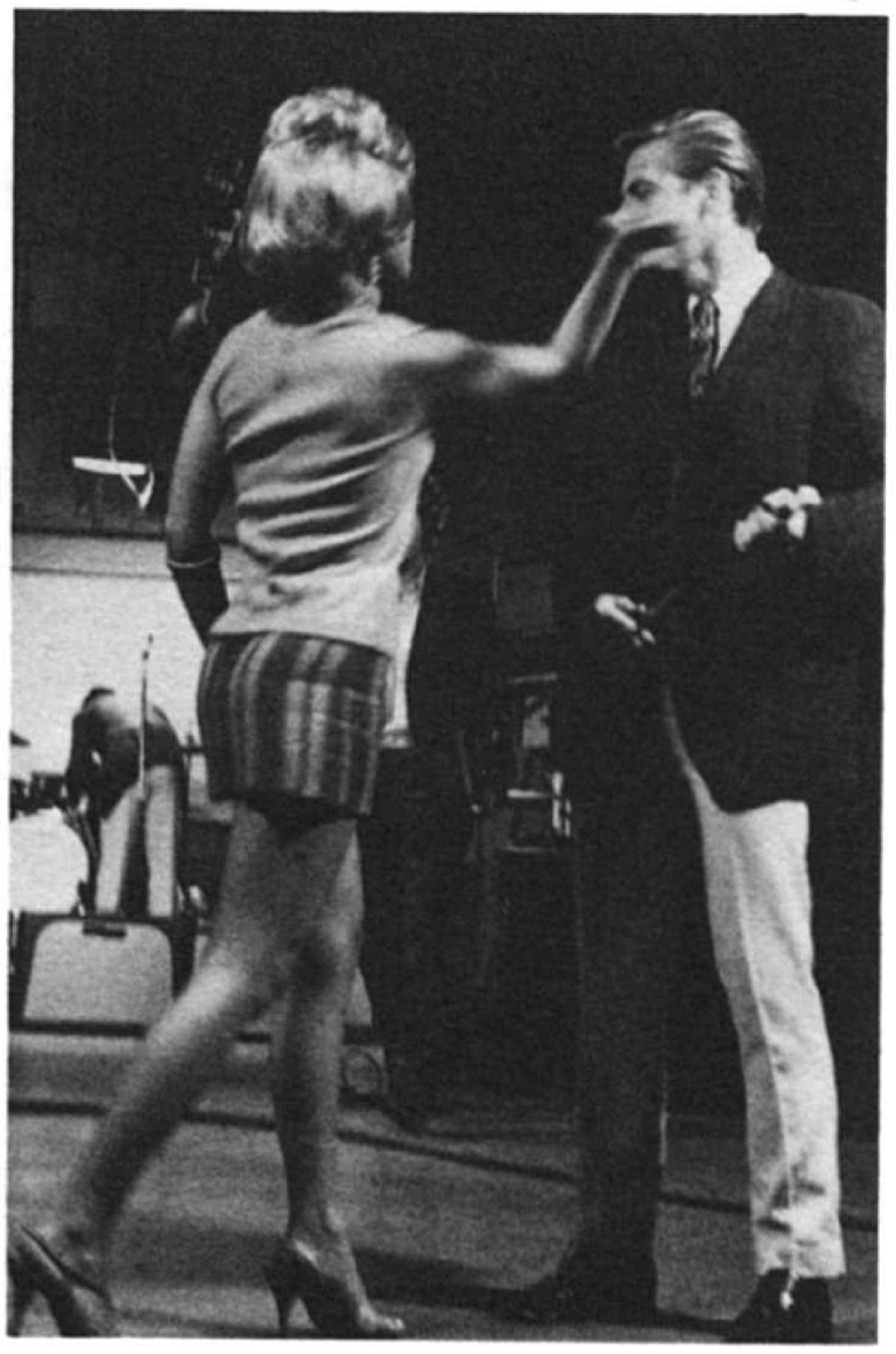
UNBELIEVABLE! The girls with MINI-SKIRTS and MINI-MORALS who follow THE BIG BLAST of the HARD ROCK MUSIC GROUPS!

starring
DAN CONWAY as Boojie Baker, King Of The Rock Groups
and featuring the hot new groups
● THE FADED BLUE ●
and
● CHARLIE ●
plus
HOSE FRUGGING WILDCATS THE BLAST-OFF GIRLS THEMSELVES

see them in EYE-BLASTING COLOR

16 **Boojie Baker realizes that it just isn't going to be his day when one of his very loyal *Blast-Off Girls* smacks him in the kisser.**

16



ho by his present band because he hasn't paid them for months. Undaunted, he picks up a new band of struggling musicians and induces them to work for him with promises of fame, money and women. Boojie arranges for a group of women under his influence, the Blast-Off Girls, to rush the band at its first concert and literally tear the guys' shirts off. The band is an overnight sensation.

Boojie and his dullard assistant Gordie raise the group to prominence, almost wholly by providing the right people in the recording industry with sexual favors from women on the payroll. Finally, the group rebels against Boojie because of the ridiculous terms of its fifty-fifty contract with him. Releasing the group from its contract, Boojie suggests that to show there are no hard feelings, the group attend one of his famous parties.

The party turns out to be a sordid affair combining women, whiskey and marijuana. Gordie is there but Boojie isn't.

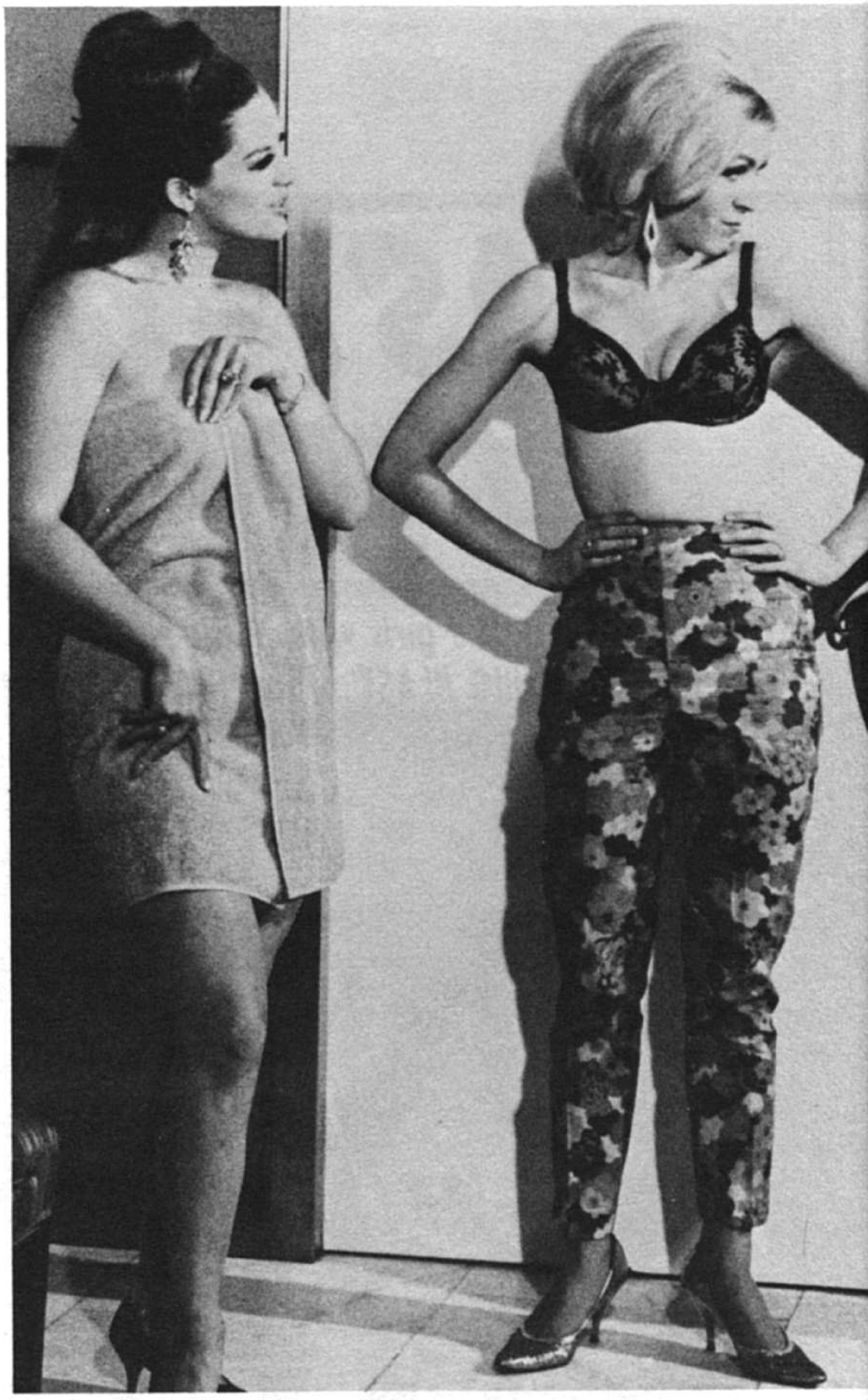
17 **A powerful record executive ogles a pair of curvacious *Blast-Off Girls*. The picture was shot in Chicago, using several pop music clubs in the Old Town area as locations.**

18 **A beauteous Blast-Off Girl sips champagne.**

19 **The whiskey, women and grass party. Note: cigar smoke substituted for marijuana smoke.**

20 **Percy Corley (Robert Wood, left) and Dr. Hamilcar West (Jim Vance, right) recoil in horror as their first experiment in creating a computer-generated woman flops. Paul Jensen plays the reject. From Lewis' *How to Make a Doll* (1968).**

17

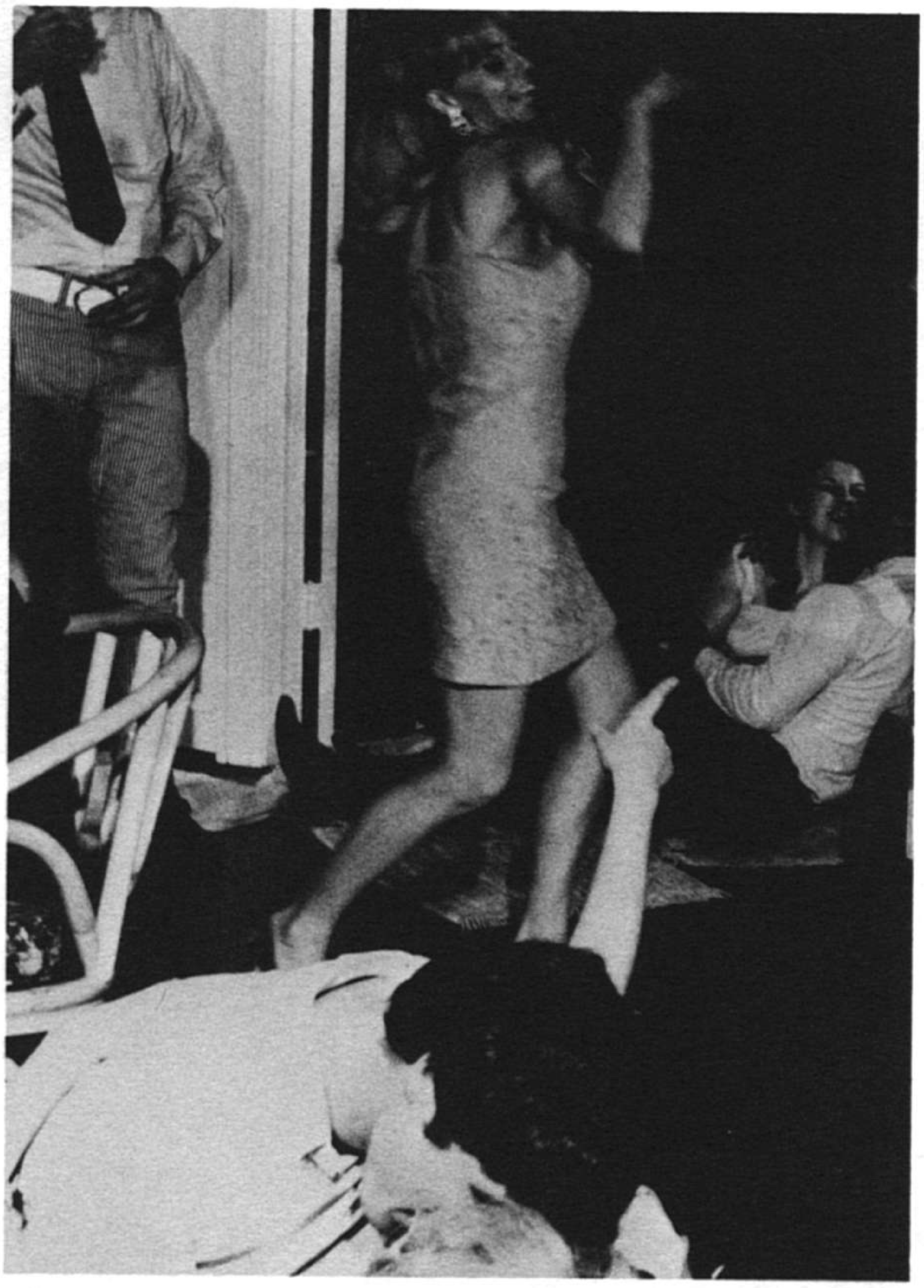


18

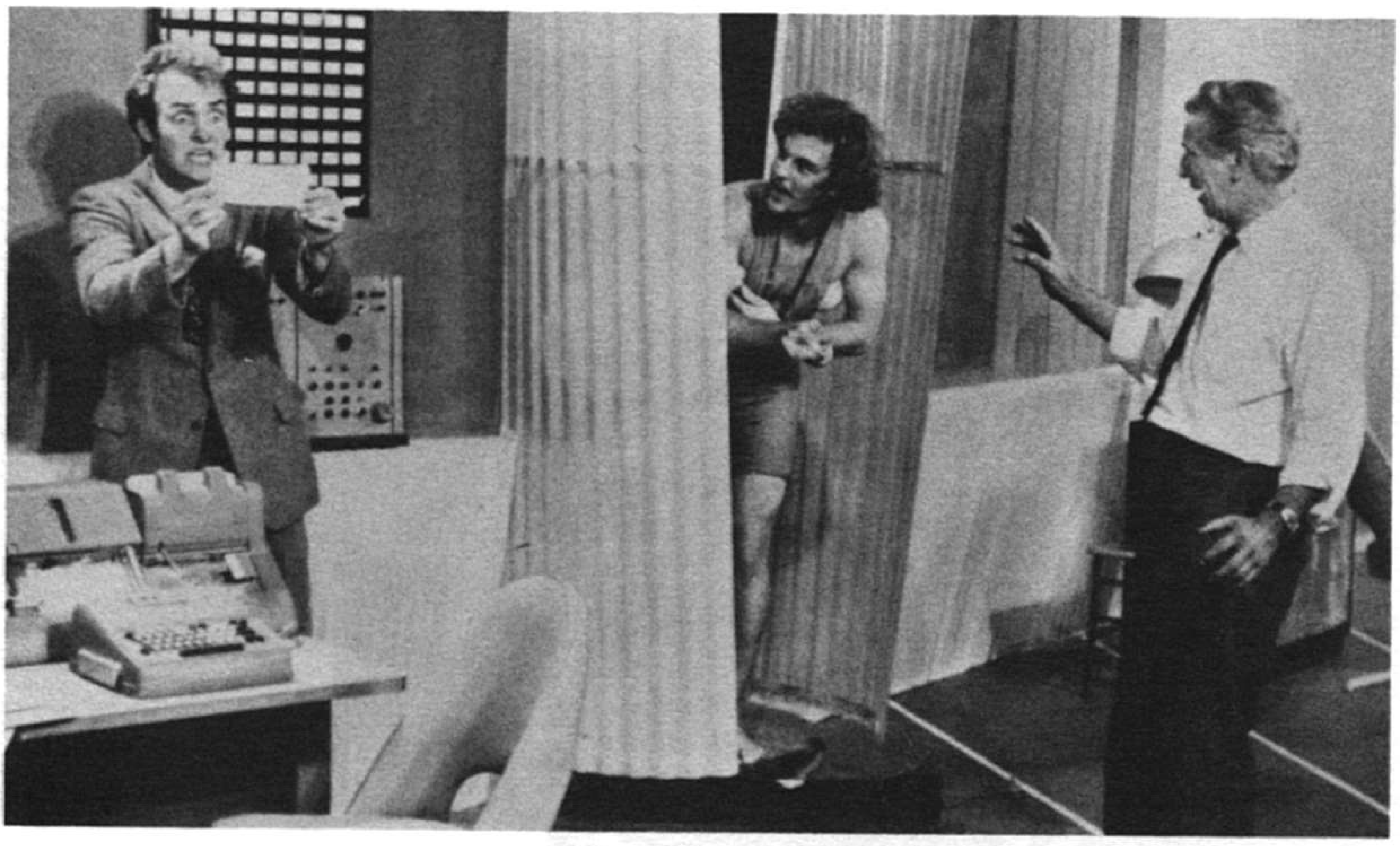
There is a knock at the door; the police come in and place everyone under arrest for possession of drugs. Moments later, Boojie waltzes in and tells the police lieutenant to release Gordie. Amazingly, he complies. Boojie then offers the same deal to any band member present who will sign a new ironclad contract with him for long-term service. Naturally, they all sign to avoid arrest. After the band leaves, the policeman is revealed to be another of Boojie's slippery contacts.

Dispirited by their virtual slavery to Boojie, the band's music goes downhill. Only one album is completed. In a desperate, last ditch attempt to get the band back on the track, Boojie arranges for a gig on a network TV show, but the band shows up drunk and sings a satirical, unflattering song about Boojie himself. Boojie loses his cool, telling the group it will never work again. The band members seize Boojie, douse him with cold coffee, and tear the contract in his pocket

19

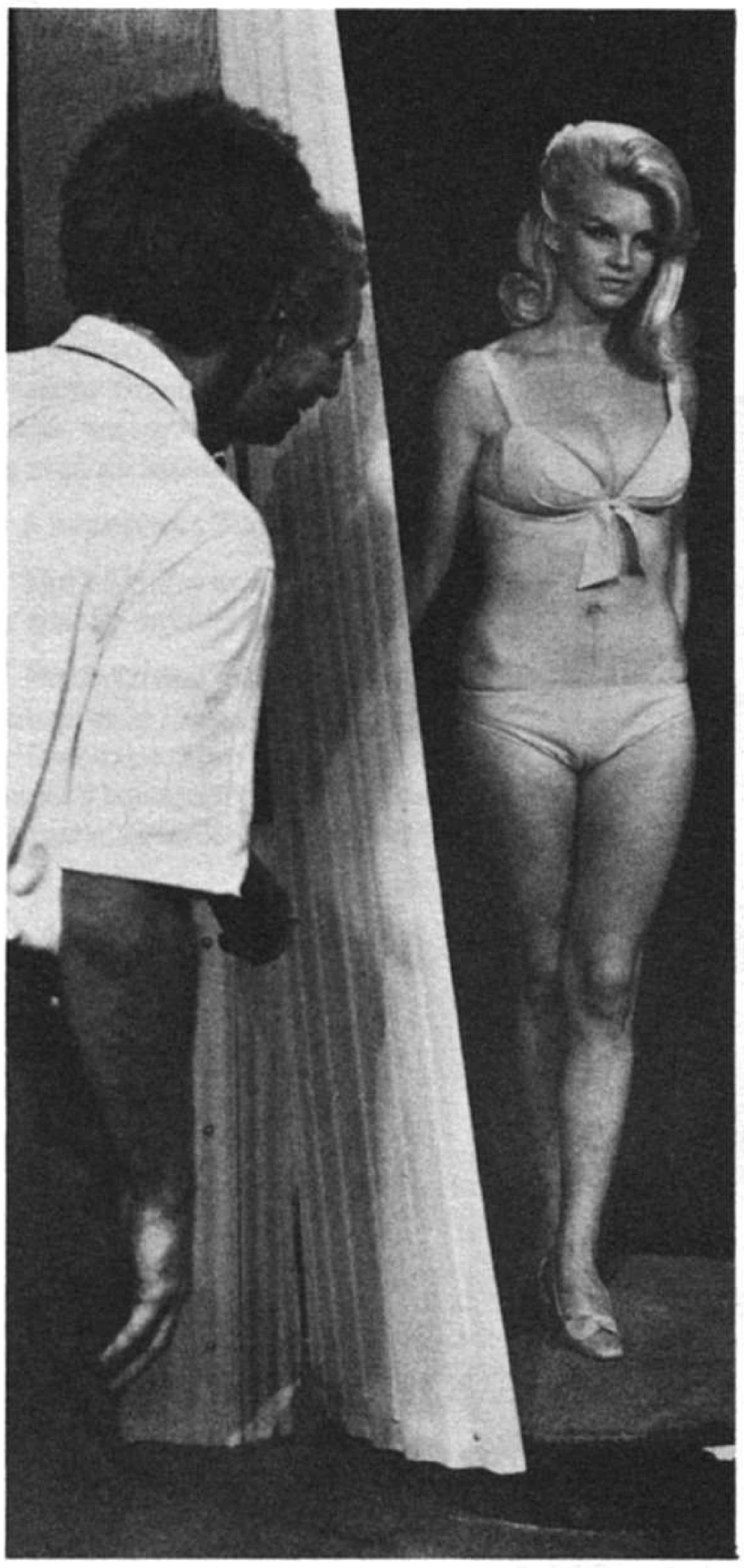


20

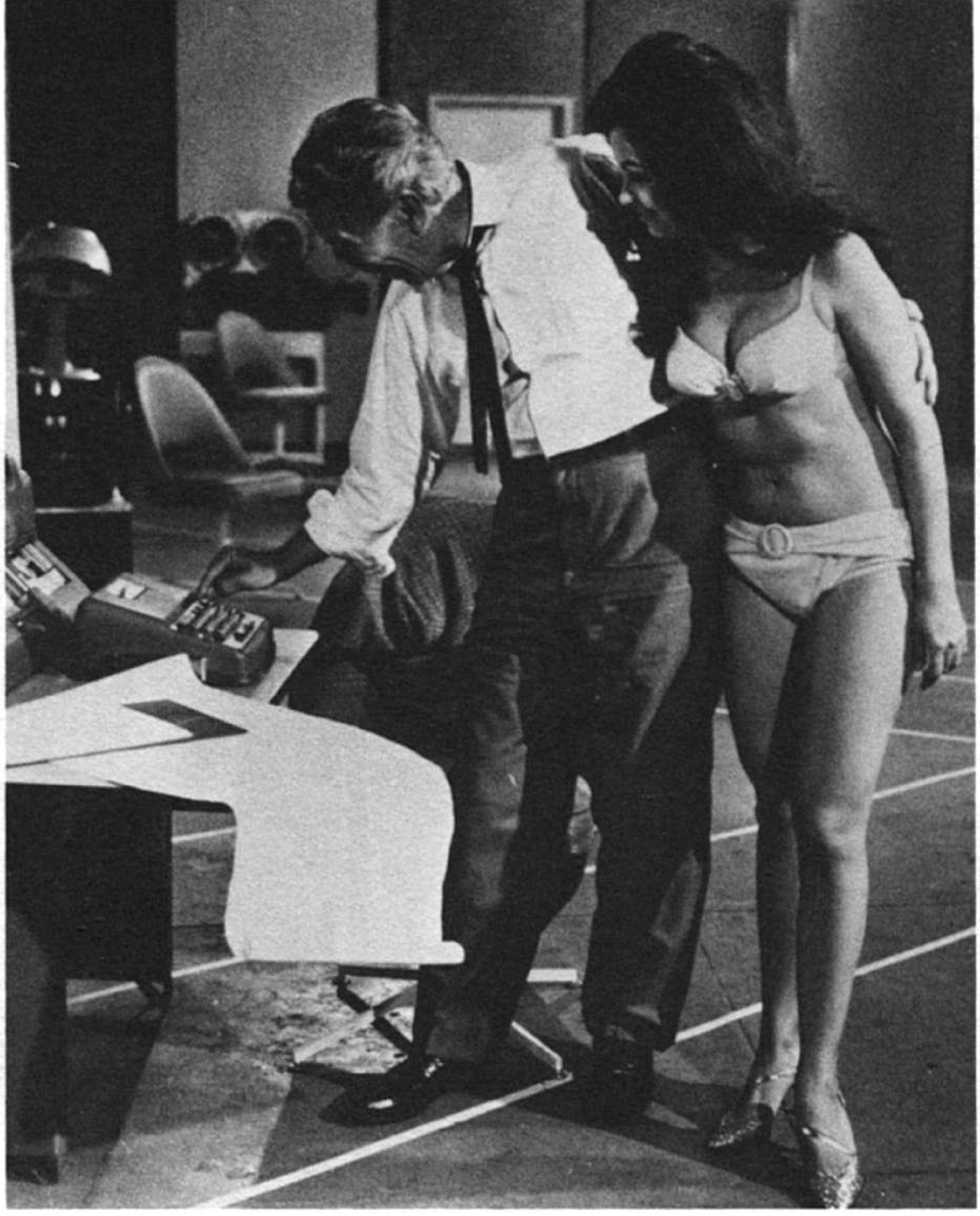


to shreds. The group is now free and Boojie is out in the cold. But not for long, for he's already in search of a brand new band that he can exploit amorally. The film ends with an extended sequence over which the credits appear showing the band members cavorting *à la* the Beatles all over Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo. To me this seems too self-consciously imitative and artsy for Herschell. He probably just needed the sequence to bring the picture up to a certain length.

Having covered suburbia and show biz as themes, Lewis decided to enter the computer age with his 1968 burlesque sex comedy *How to Make a Doll*. Working again with David Chudnow (under the Unusual Films banner), Herschell penned the screenplay himself (under the pseudonym Sheldon Seymour), in collaboration with Bert Ray. The film is basically all interiors and was lensed in an abandoned movie theatre with sets created by Spyridon Horiatus. It had the alternate



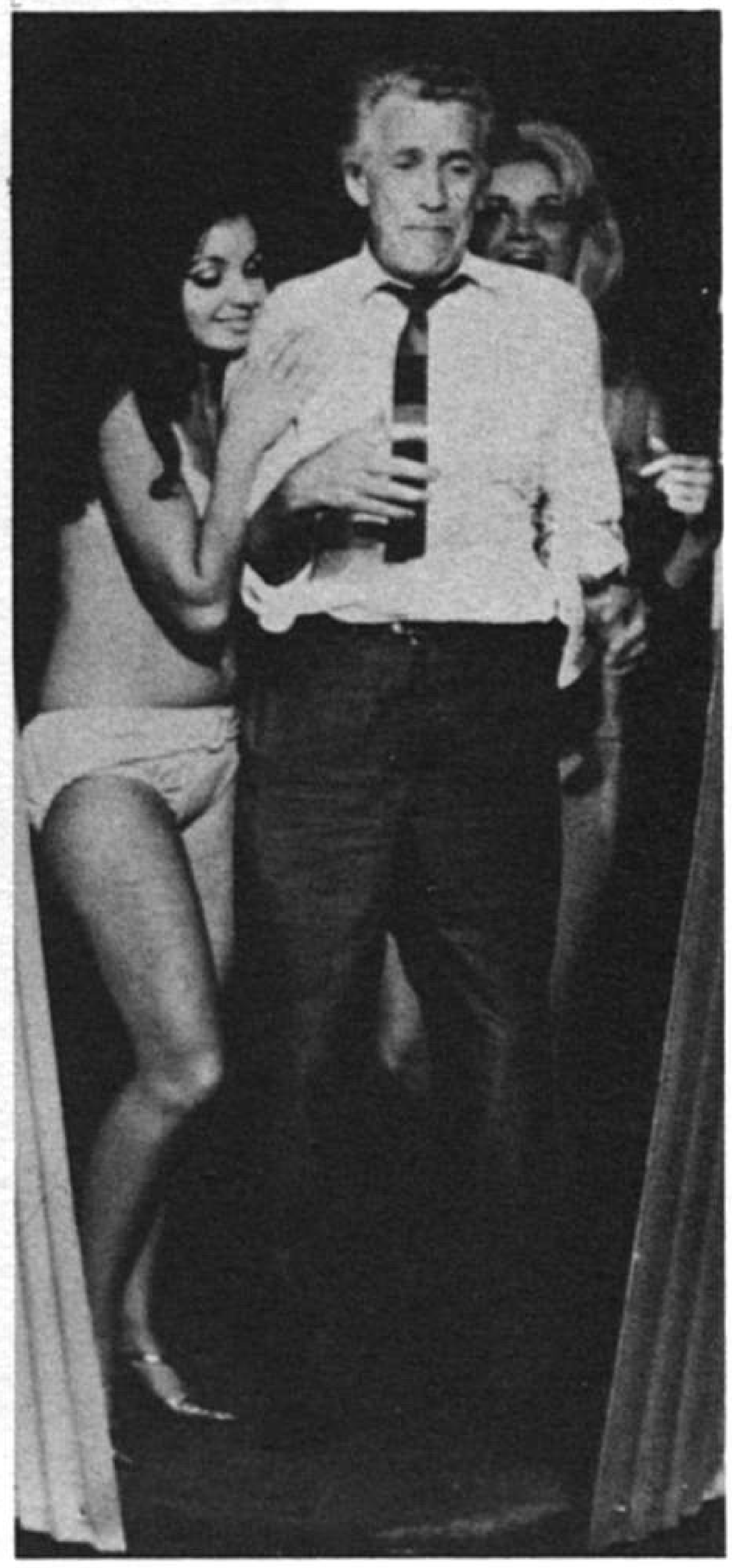
21



22

23

24



21 **A second attempt meets with resounding success as this shapely android emerges from the computer.**

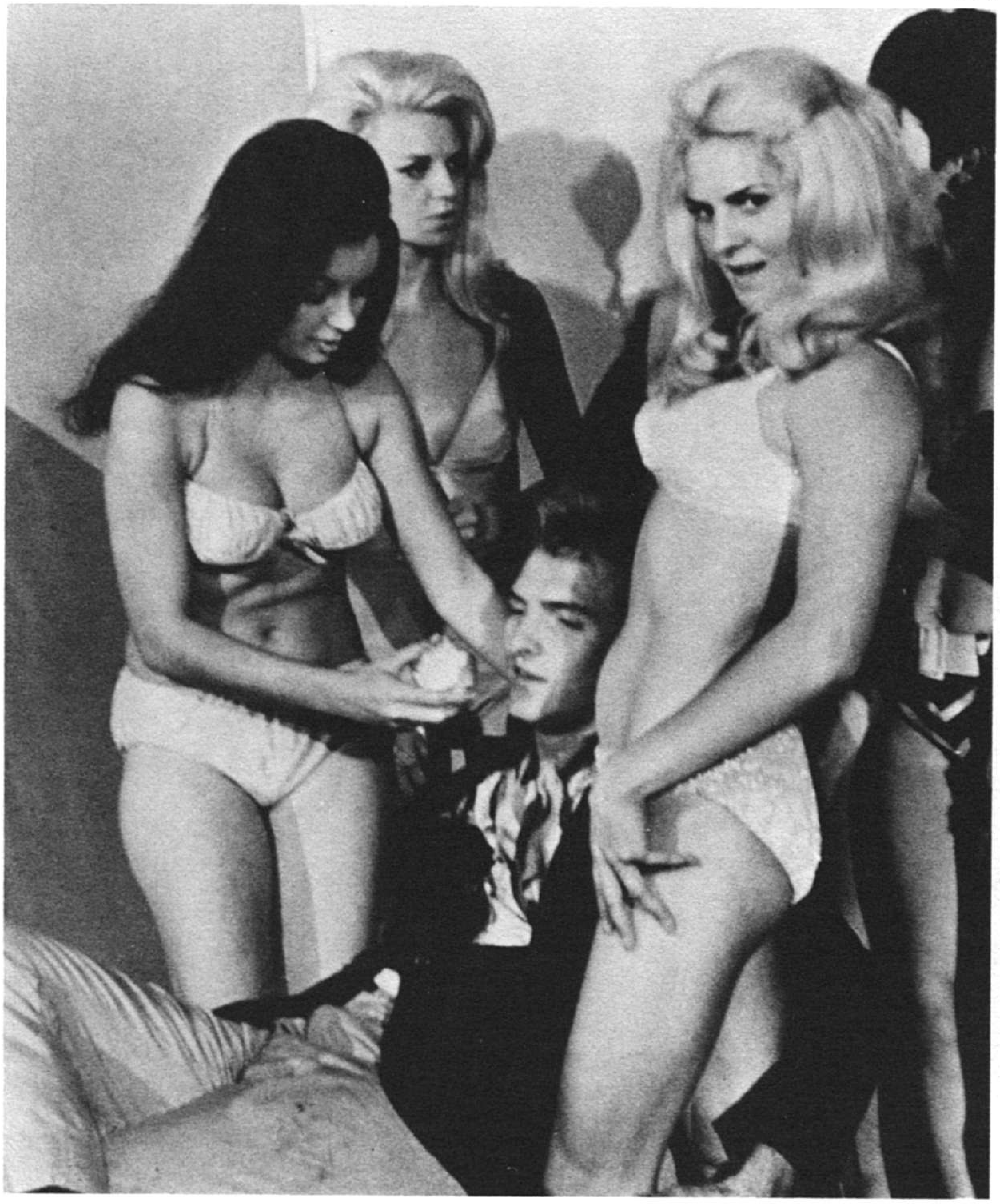
22 **Dr. West (Jim Vance) must be punching up a *menage à trois* considering that he already has one "doll" on his arm.**

23 **Percy (Robert Wood) ogles his latest creation.**

24 **Having suffered a heart attack, the dying Dr. West (Jim Vance) is spirited into the electronic brain by his helpful female creations.**

25 **The computer women tempt Percy with the forbidden fruit, but he wants a real woman.**

25



title of *How to Love a Doll*.

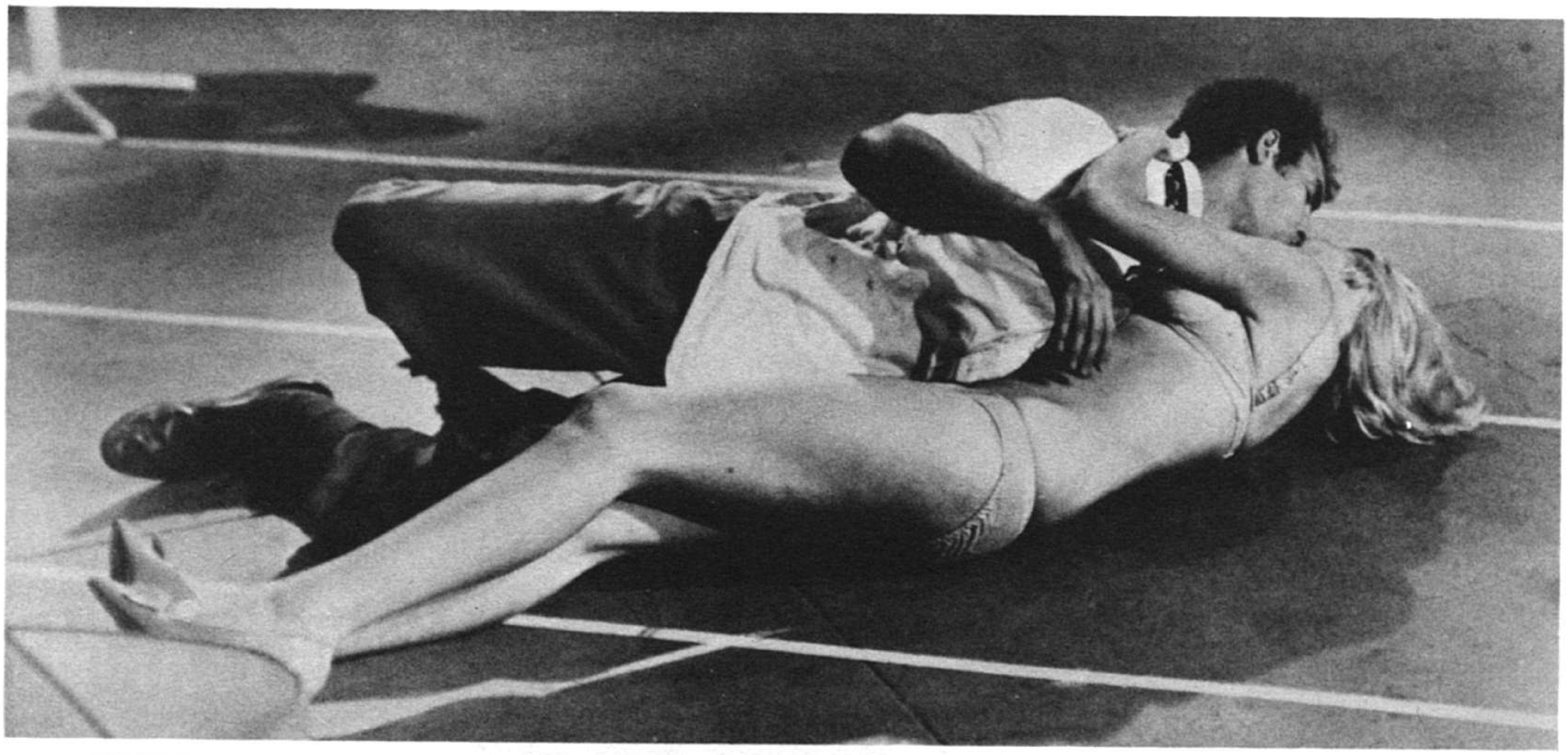
Professor of Mathematics Percy Corley works overtime with his brilliant supervisor, Dr. Hamilcar West, to program a computer to produce beautiful android women. Dr. West dies of a heart attack following an orgy with some of his successful female creations, but his brain lives on inside the computer. The computerized West then proceeds to get his sexual kicks vicariously by watching Percy make it with all the computer women. But Percy grows dissatisfied; he wants a real mate. He starts battling with West's electronic brain and succeeds in erasing West's memory circuits. But not before West counterattacks, creating a mob of sensual computer women who attempt to rape Percy. At the last minute he cancels them by destroying their punch cards.

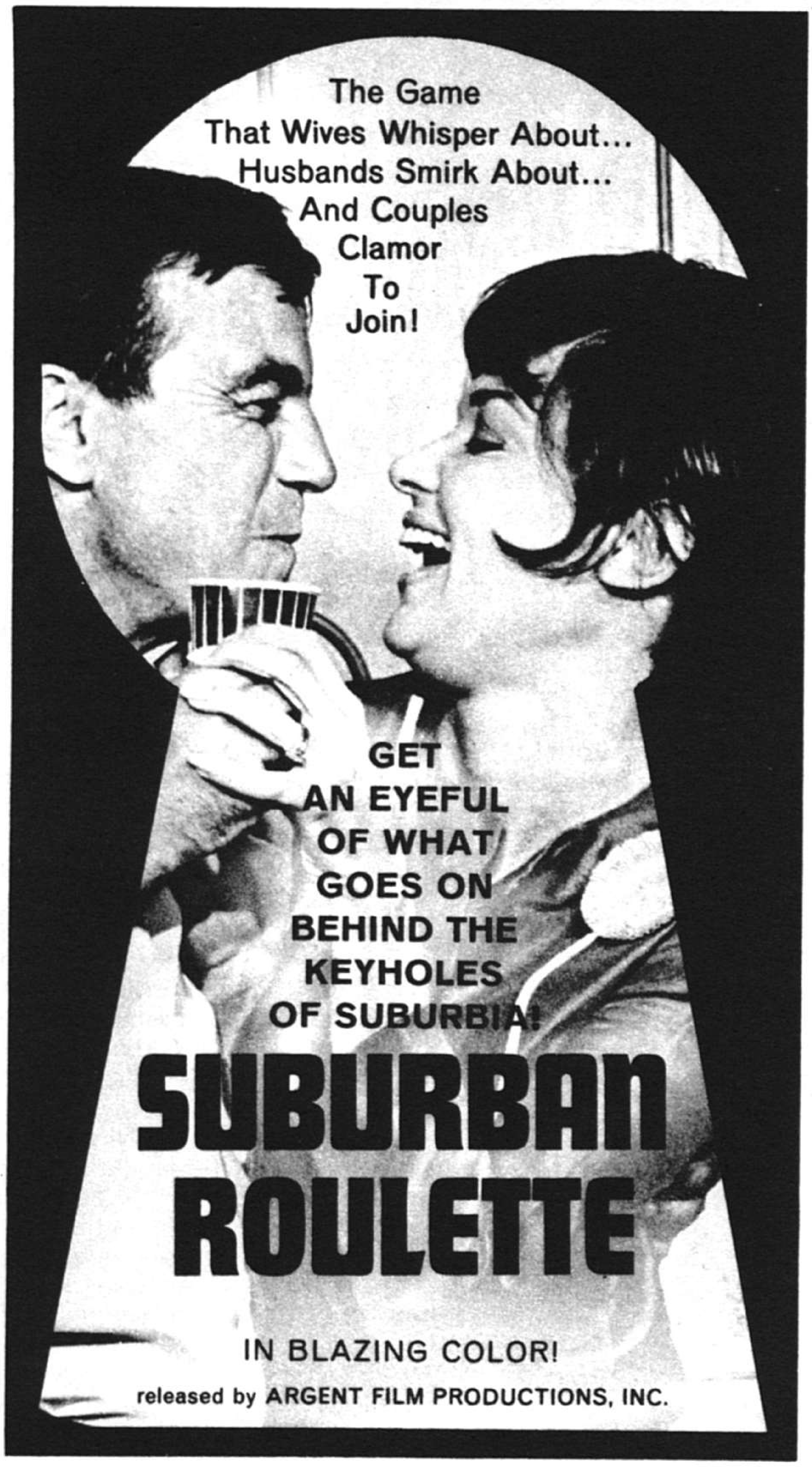
A dejected Percy, his eyeglasses smashed, leaves the computer center and bumps into Agnes Turnbull, a plain

26 **These computer-generated beauties marvel at their new found existence in *How to Make a Doll.***

27 **Percy (Robert Wood) succumbs to the charms of one of the computer-generated women he helped create.**

26




The Game
That Wives Whisper About...
Husbands Smirk About...
And Couples
Clamor
To
Join!
GET
AN EYEFUL
OF WHAT
GOES ON
BEHIND THE
KEYHOLES
OF SUBURBIA!
SUBURBAN
ROULETTE
IN BLAZING COLOR!
released by ARGENT FILM PRODUCTIONS, INC.

looking graduate student who has loved him from afar. His vision blurred, Percy falls in love with her, and they go off hand in hand. Heartwarming, huh? A true Herschell Gordon Lewis love story.

★ *A TASTE OF BLOOD* ★
★ *THE GRUESOME TWOSOME* ★

# CHAPTER EIGHT

# Gore again, the second wave

**The screens of small indoor theatres and drive-ins in the south were again splattered with crimson in 1967 when Herschell Lewis returned to the gore genre that had made his reputation. The film was *A Taste of Blood,* a vampire tale based on a continuation of the Count Dracula legend but updated to modern times. The picture turned out to be an epic production in terms of length. Herschell's exploitation films usually averaged between 60 to 80 minutes. *A Taste of Blood* clocked in at a whopping 120 minutes!**

American businessman John Stone gets an unexpected package from England marked "Of Gravest Urgency." Inside, he discovers two bottles of an ancient Yugoslavian brandy, Slivovitz, plus written instructions to drink the alcohol in a toast to a long-dead relative on his mother's side of the family. John's wife, Helene, is a bit apprehensive, but he drinks the Slivovitz anyway, suffering no immediate side effects. But by the time he has drained both bottles, he is transformed into a nighttime wanderer who falls into a deathlike sleep by day.

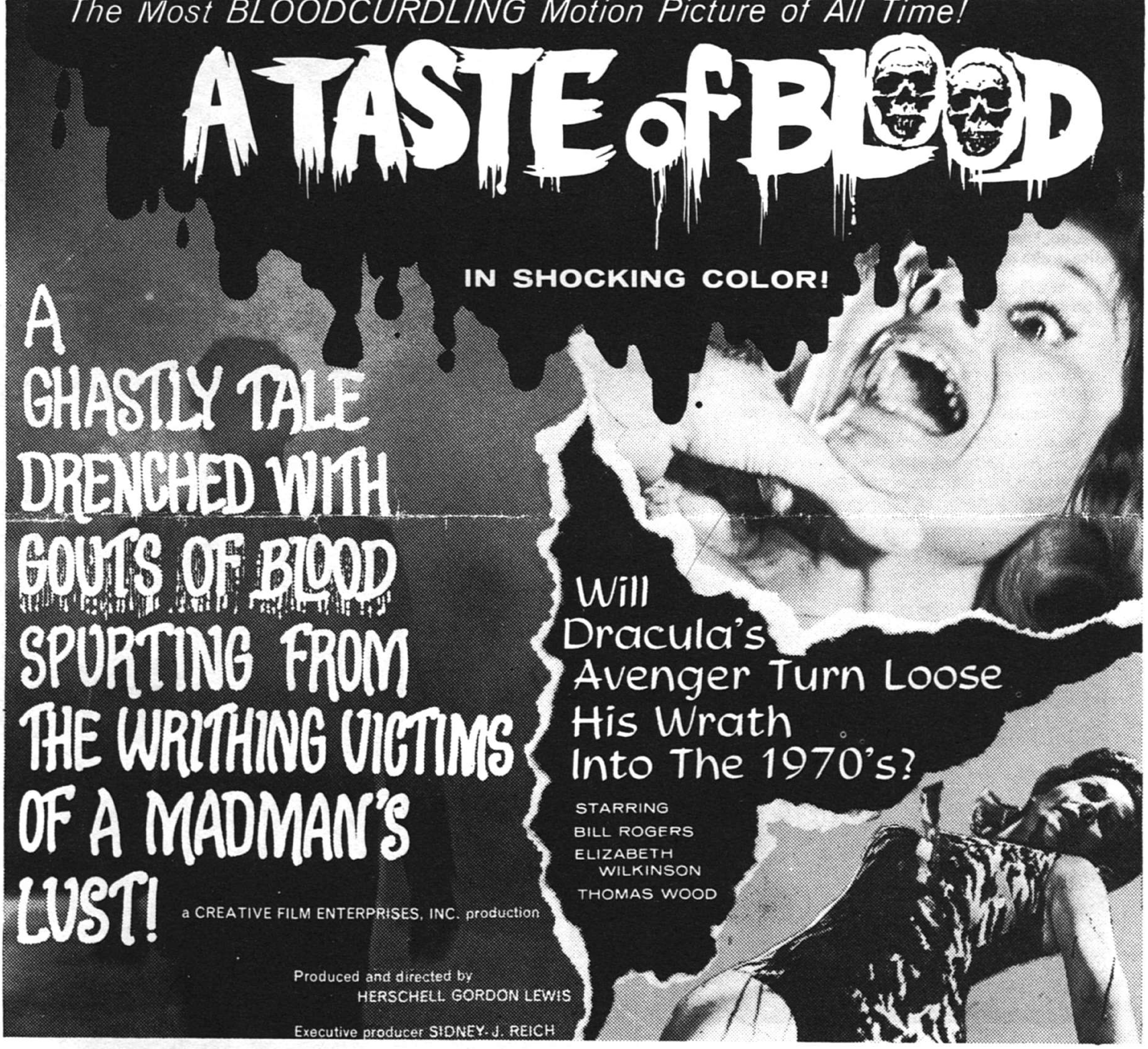
In fact, Stone is not just stoned, he has become a vampire. The brandy, you see, is spiked with the blood of the Draculas, from whom Stone is descended. Traveling to England, he gets so caught up in the cult of Dracula that he decides to become the avenger of his famous ancestor by killing all the descendants of those who had a part in Dracula's demise.

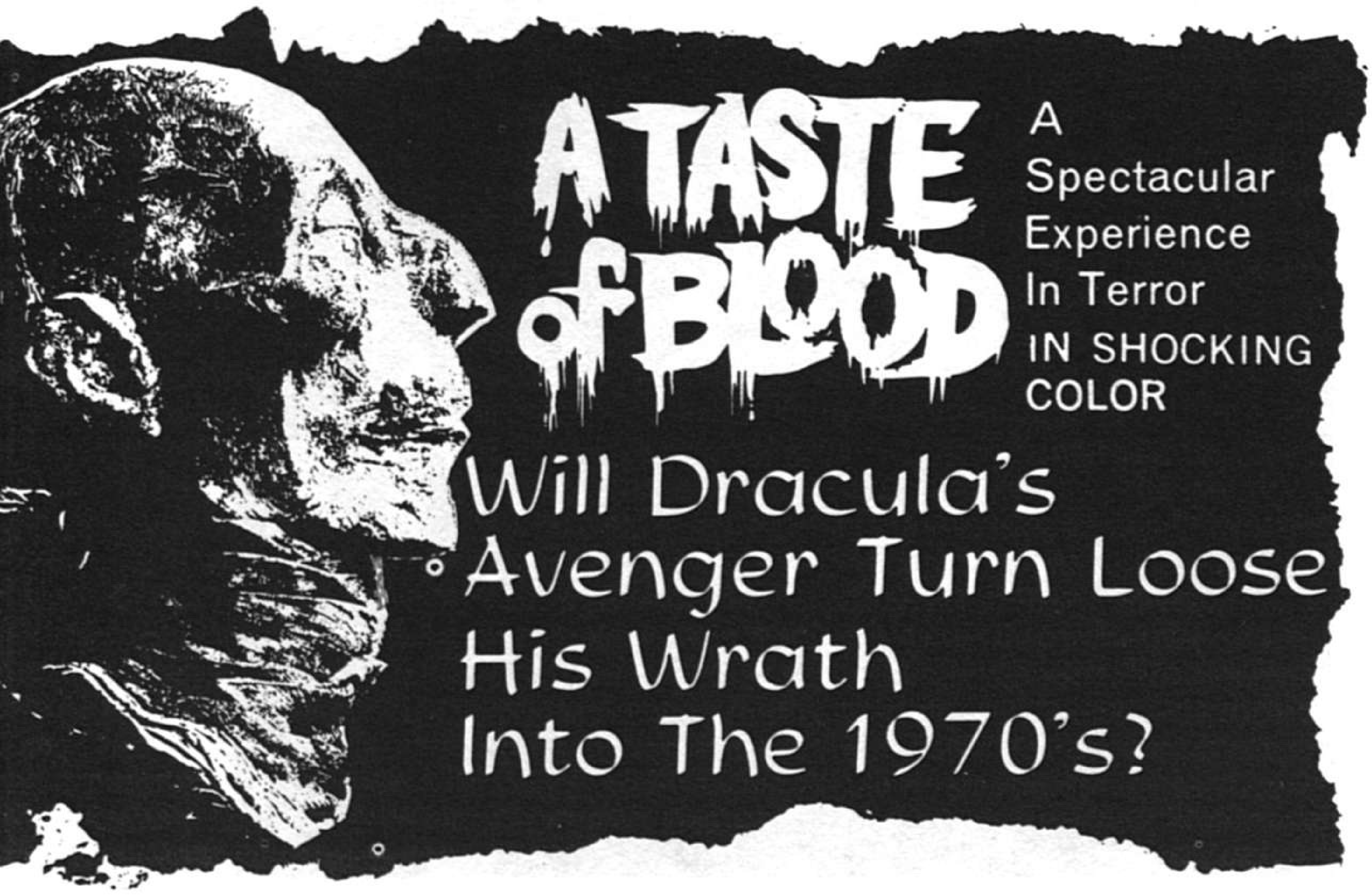
After murdering two victims with garden variety wooden stakes, Stone decides to get truly creative in executing the demise of his third victim, young Lord Gold, dispatching him by plunging the splintered end of a broken pool cue through his heart.

Returning to the States, Stone cuts himself off from his friends and business associates, living only by night, sleeping all day in a concealed coffin. By this time he has also come into possession of Dracula's ring, which produces weird colors that have a hypnotic effect. He uses the ring to his advantage by keeping Helene in a trance-like state. One night, while visiting a burlesque theatre, Stone decides to use the ring on stripper Vivacious Vivian, impelling her to visit his apartment. But when the hapless girl accidentally cuts her finger during his attempts at seduction, he is suddenly overcome by bloodlust and kills her.

Flying to Houston, Stone murders the last descendant of Dracula's executioners, Sherri Morris. He stabs her with a wooden letter opener and dumps her body into her luxury swimming pool, staining it blood red.

Meanwhile, Helene, who has grown upset over her husband's recent strange behavior (about time!), discusses her feeling with a family friend, Dr. Hank Tyson. During this discussion, they receive a visitor from Europe, Dr. Howard Helsing who has brought circumstantial evidence


The Most BLOODCURDLING Motion Picture of All Time!
A TASTE of BLOOD
IN SHOCKING COLOR!
A GHASTLY TALE DRENCHED WITH GOUTS OF BLOOD SPURTING FROM THE WRITHING VICTIMS OF A MADMAN'S LUST!
a CREATIVE FILM ENTERPRISES, INC. production
Will Dracula's Avenger Turn Loose His Wrath Into The 1970's?
STARRING
BILL ROGERS
ELIZABETH WILKINSON
THOMAS WOOD
Produced and directed by HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS
Executive producer SIDNEY J. REICH


A TASTE of BLOOD
A Spectacular Experience In Terror
IN SHOCKING COLOR
Will Dracula's Avenger Turn Loose His Wrath Into The 1970's?

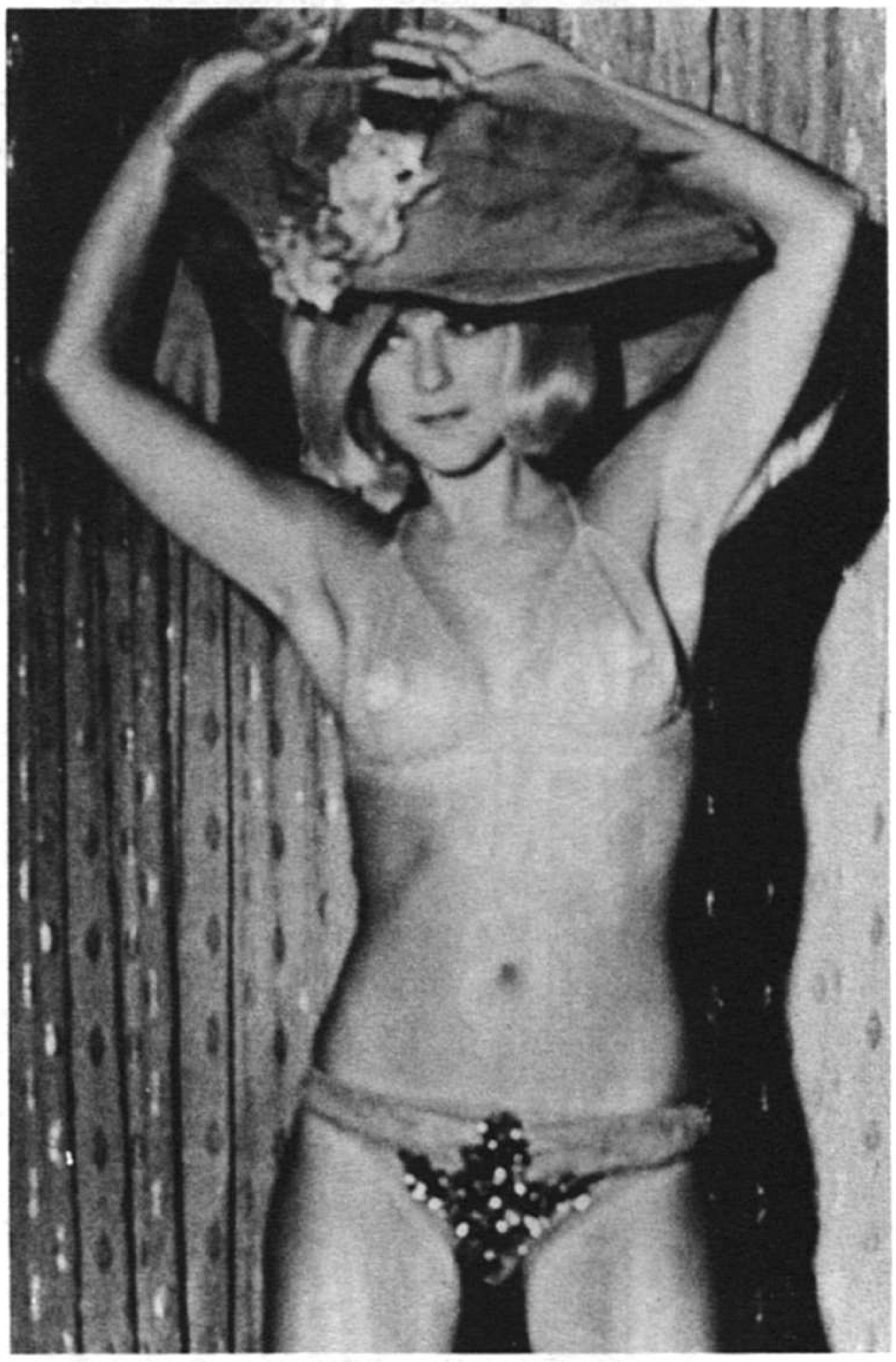
linking Stone to a series of murders there. Hank defends his friend, but upon hearing of the death of Sherri Morris in Houston and knowing that Stone is currently there, he determines to help Helsing set a trap.

Stone returns home and is almost immediately arrested for the murder of Vivacious Vivian, but because of his now superhuman strength, he easily overcomes the police and escapes. By following the perpetually hypnotised Helene, however, Tyson, Helsing and the police are able to track the vampire to his lair. There Helsing hammers the requisite wooden stake through Stone's heart. Helene is released from the hypnotic spell Stone has put her under, and the last of the Draculas bites the gore-splattered dust.

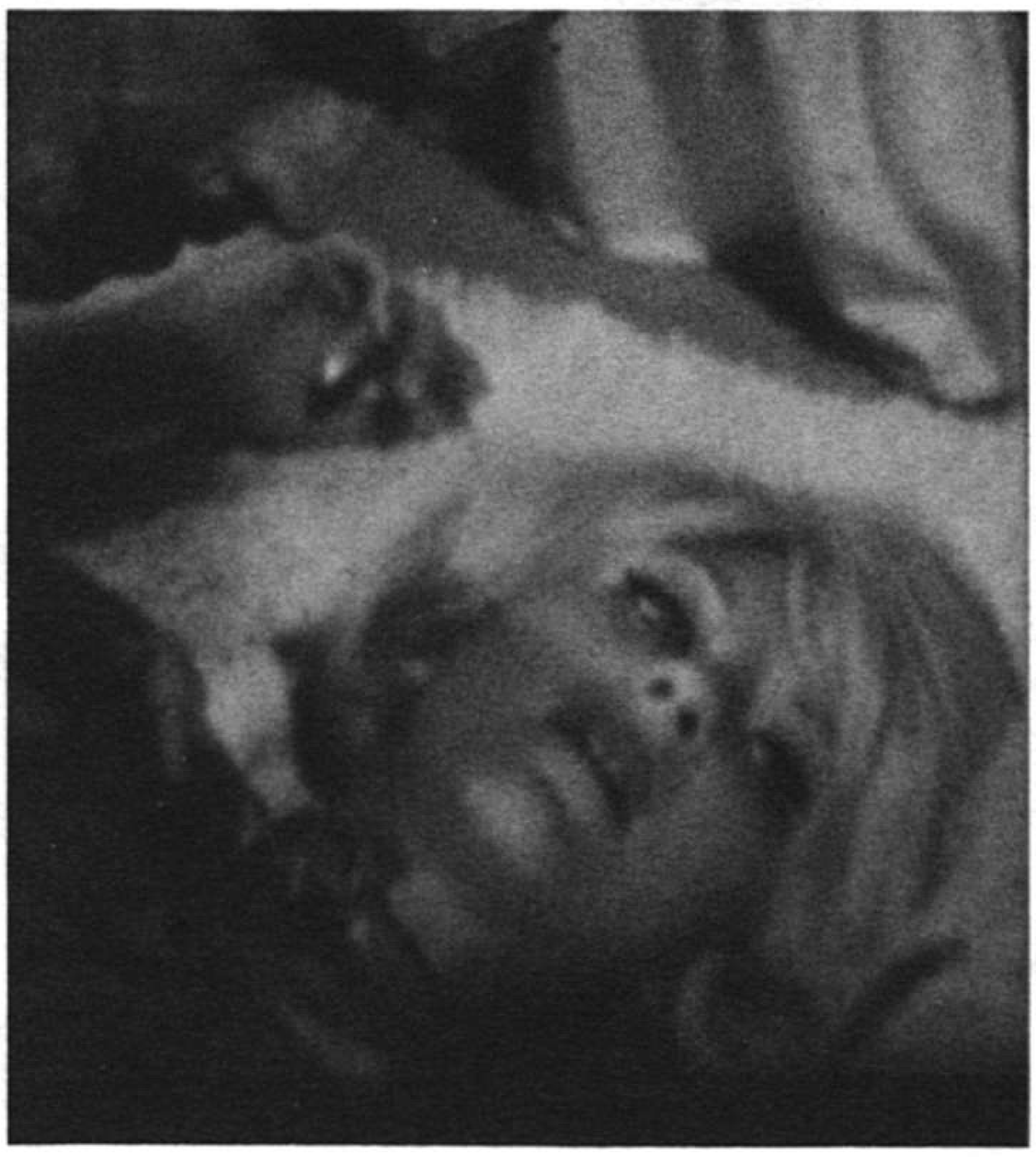
*A Taste of Blood* is Herschell's gore epic in terms of more things than just length, however. The film's production values are consistently high. The settings and

1 **Exotic dancer Vivacious Vivian (Gail Janis) performs, not knowing that there is a vampire in the audience who aims to have her for dinner.**

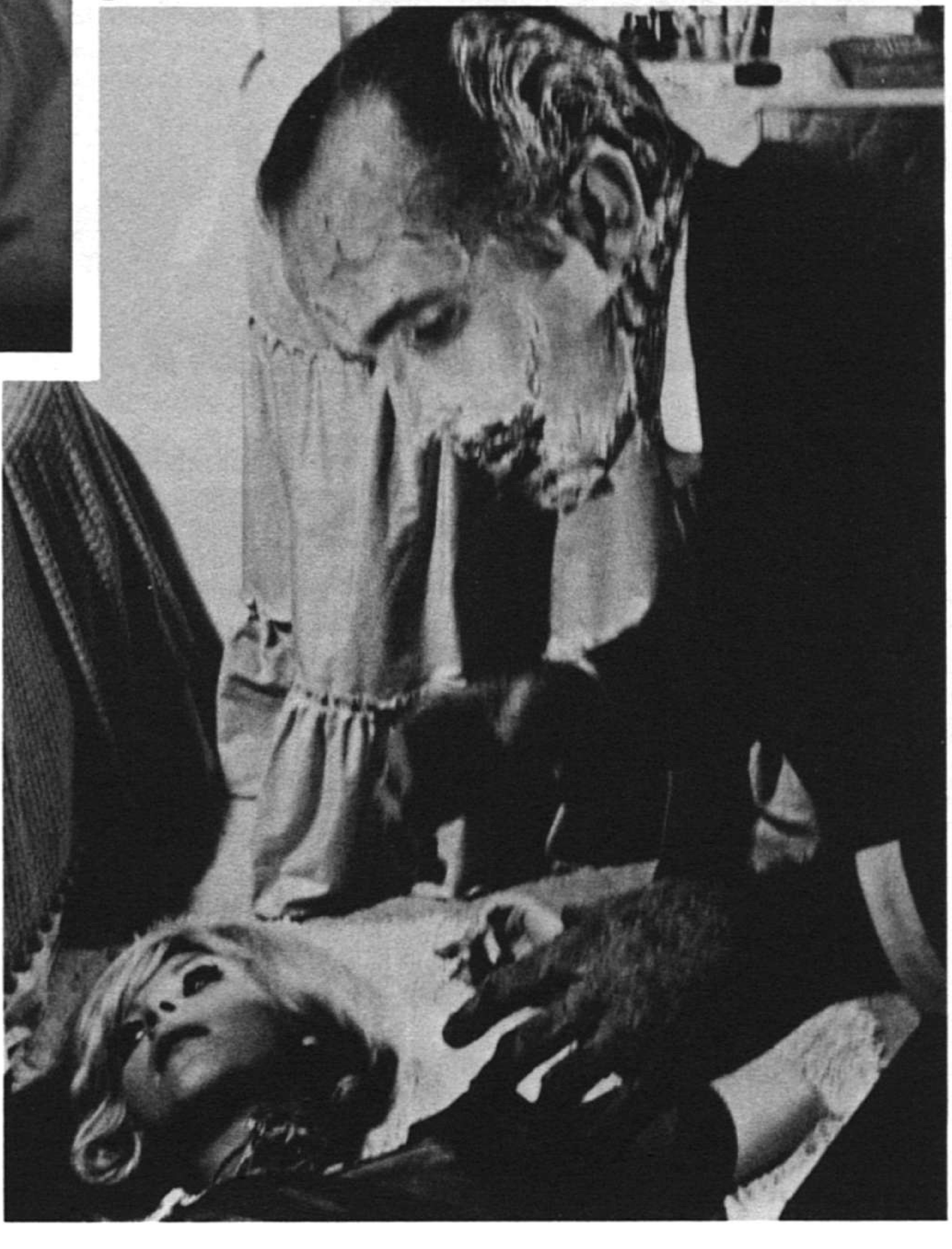
1



2



3



locations are lavish and impressive, such as the ocean-going ship from which the vampire's coffin is unloaded. The crumbling mansion which serves as the night stalker's hidden domain is also quite striking. It too was a "found" location.

The film's cinematography is exceedingly atmospheric, creating a nice gothic mood. The nighttime exteriors near the middle of the picture are heavily backlit to great advantage, offering a solid mood of misty menace. In one especially impressive scene, the vampire's shadow is made to loom giant-like over the exterior of a victim's house.

The gore effects in the film are realistic and suitably ghastly, as befitting the reputation of the Wizard of Gore. The murder of Lord Gold with the pool cue as well as the final impalement of Stone by the good guys are quite vivid. As Herschell might say: the blood spurted nobly. Also, in contrast to the impeccable siphoning jobs performed by past movie vampires, 2 **Vampire John Stone (Bill Rogers) dines on the throat of exotic dancer Vivacious Vivian (Gail Janis). This is a frame enlargement from the film.**

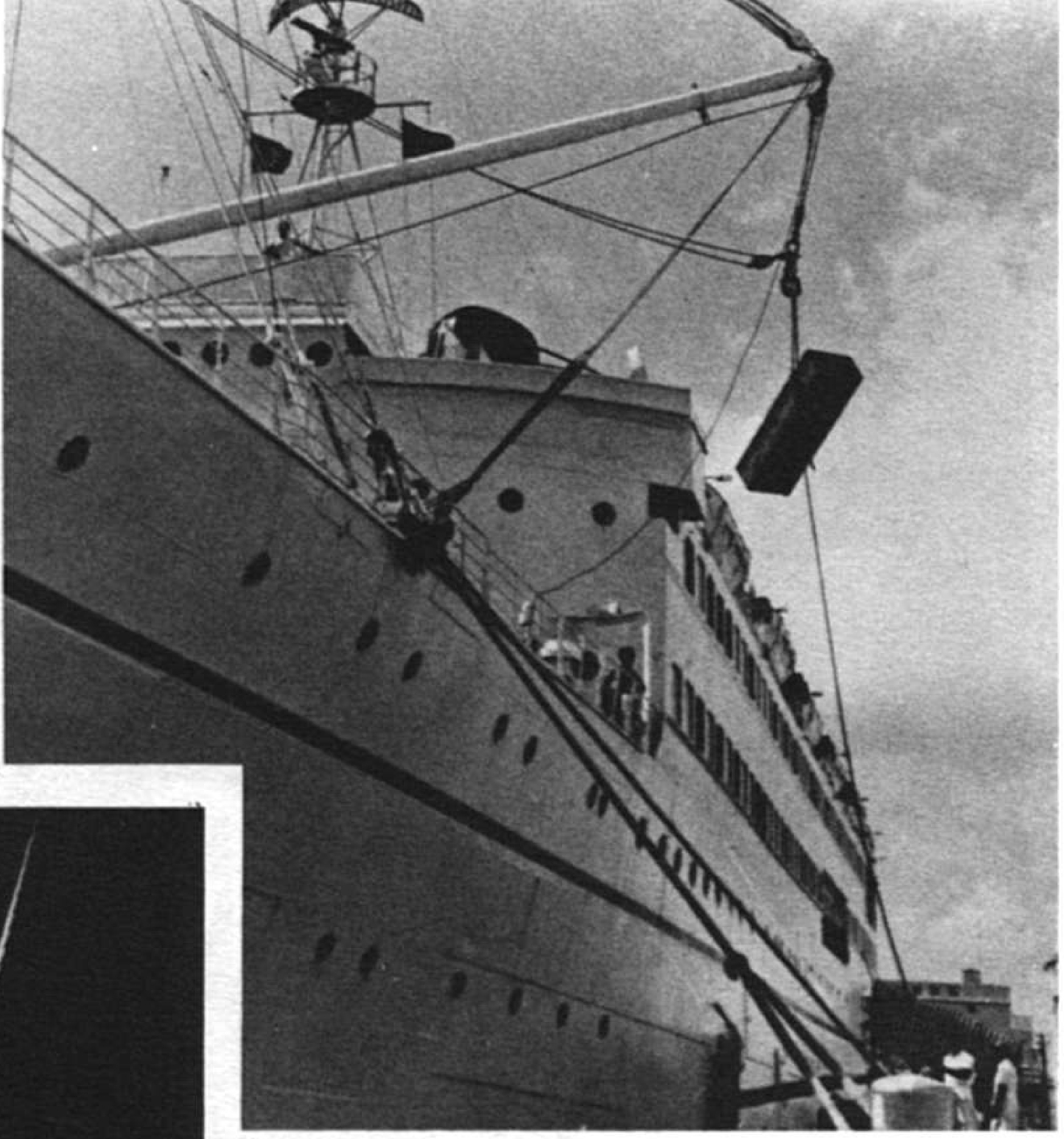
3 **John Stone, vampire descendant of Count Dracula, has just finished supping on the blood of Vivacious Vivian. Unlike most of his movie predecessors, Stone is a very messy eater.**

4 **This shot should silence any detractors who claim that Herschell's films always looked cheap. Dracula's coffin is being unloaded in America.**

5 **A British seaman (Herschell Gordon Lewis) exchanges a few words with departing businessman (and vampire) John Stone. This shot must have been made in between takes as Herschell appears to be holding the script.**

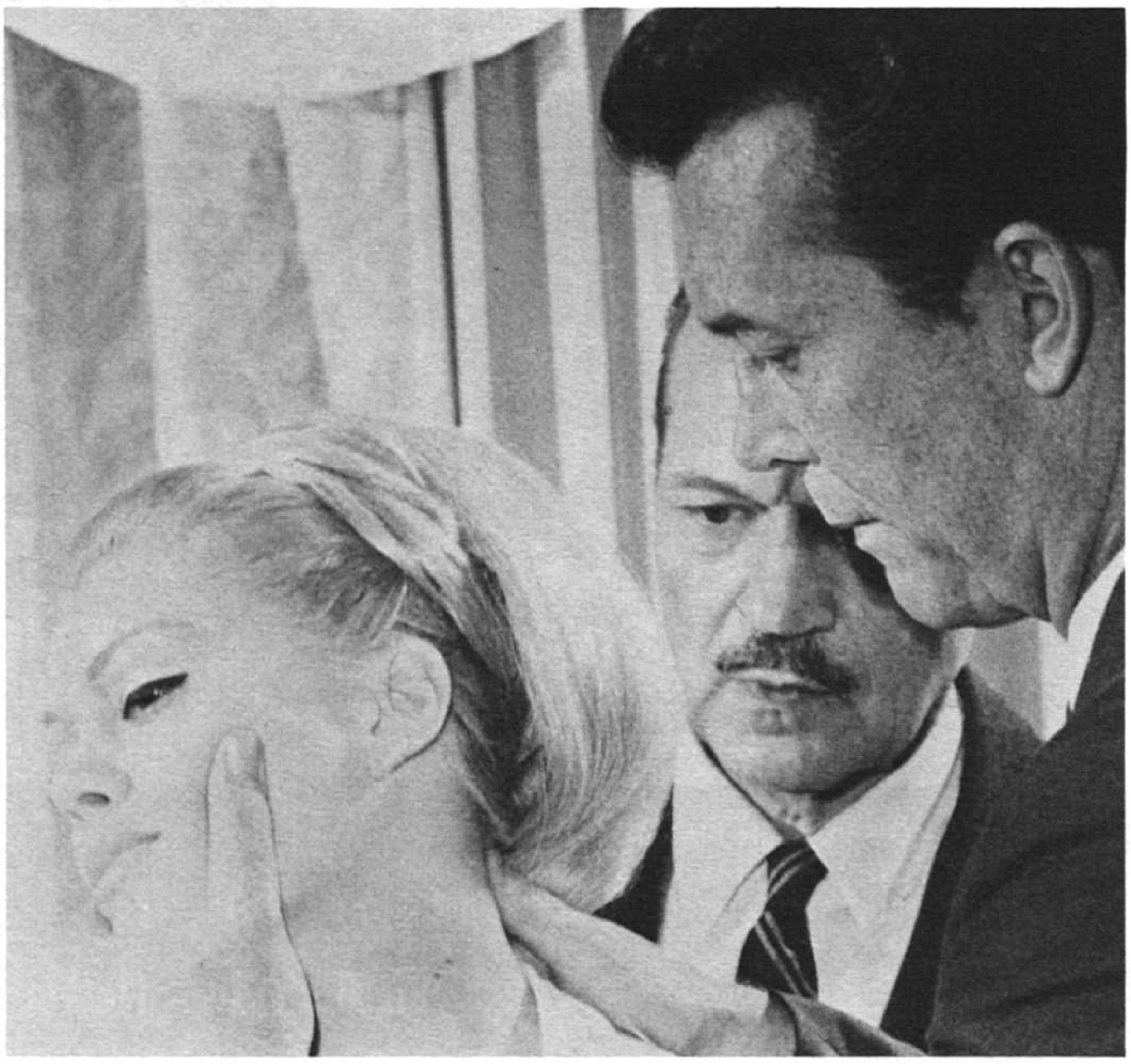
6 **Dr. Hank Tyson (Thomas Wood, right) discovers the marks of the vampire on Helene's neck. Dr. Helsing looks on.**

4



5

6

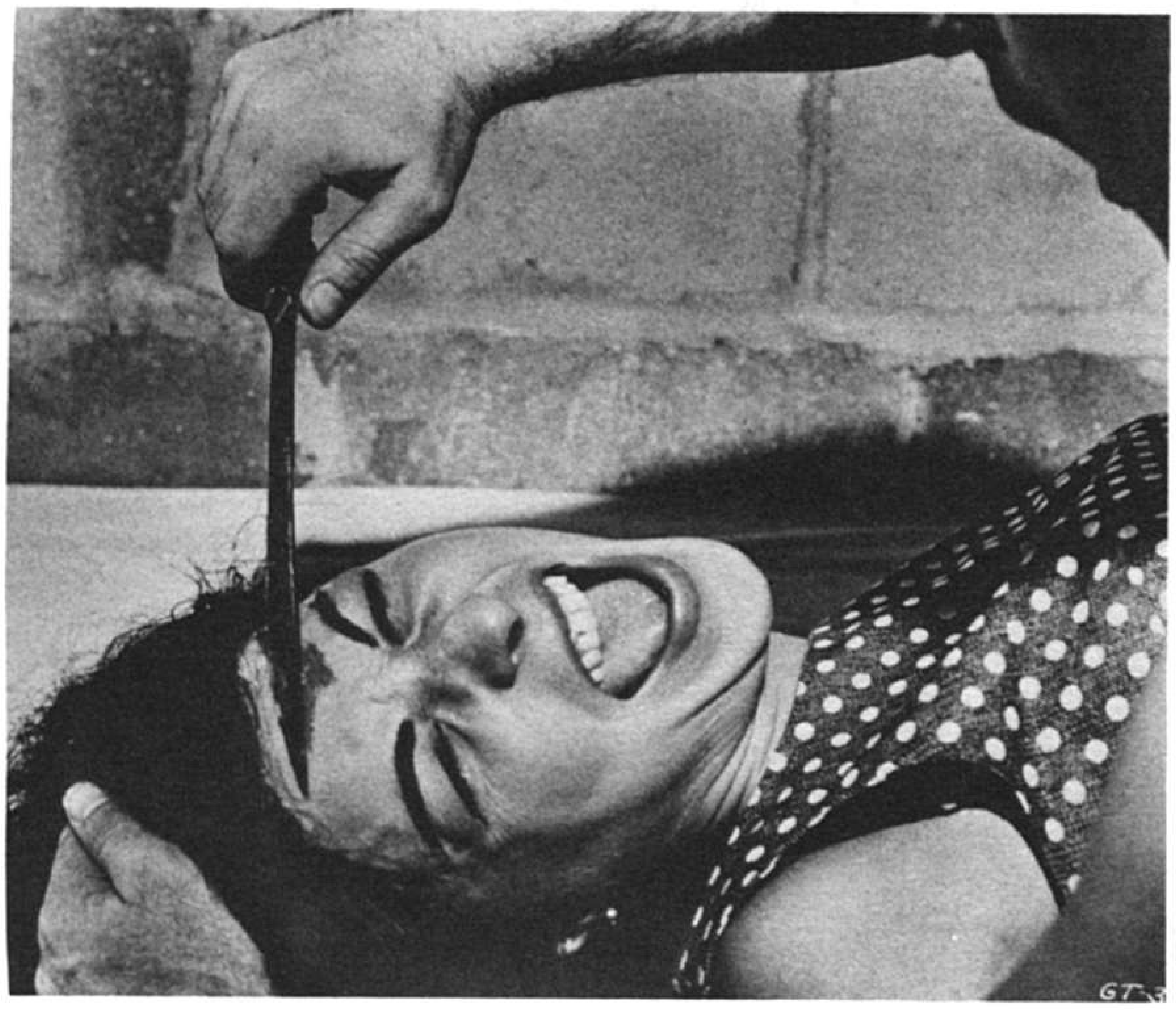


Lewis' bloodsucker is ghoulishly amusing in his sloppiness, constantly smearing his gory repast all over his face.

Knowing that he had a picture of unusually high quality in *A Taste of Blood*, Herschell decided to use it as an audition to make films for Roger Corman, his more well known and established counterpart on the west coast. Corman screened the film and was suitably impressed, but Lewis, who was expecting Corman's offer to be a financial step up for him, was distinctly unimpressed with the money Corman offered, so he turned Corman down flat and, once again, went his own way, knowing that if nothing else his own reputation in the field of exploitation filmmaking was still secure: in *A Taste of Blood* he had created the *Gone With the Wind* of gore.

As if deciding to take a rest following the herculean effort he had put in on *A Taste of Blood*, Herschell determined to make his next gore picture smaller and

7 **The victim screams in pain as the scalping begins in one of Lewis' most impressive gore effects. From *The Gruesome Twosome* (1967).**

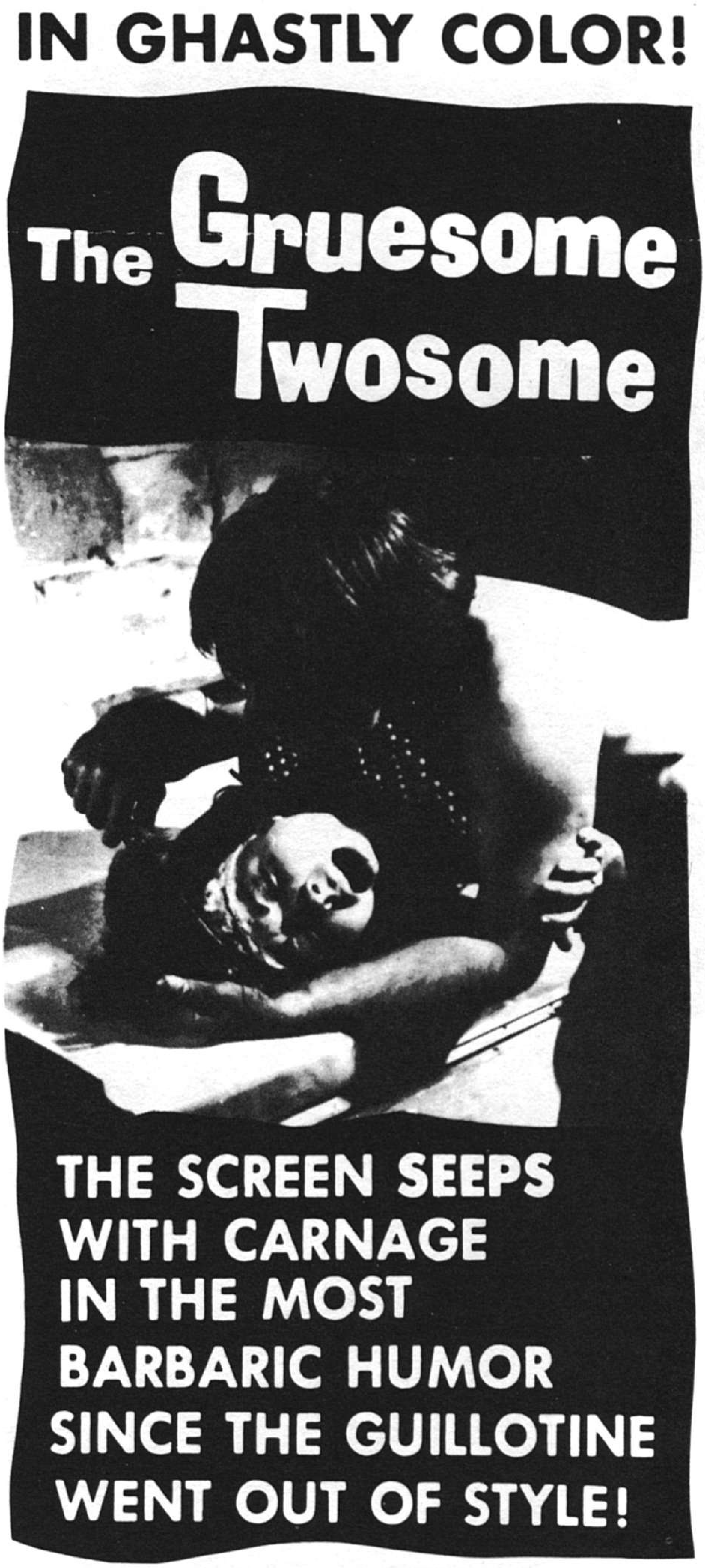


7

somewhat unassuming. Nevertheless, *The Gruesome Twosome* probably contains Lewis' best and most realistic gore effects: namely a scalping with a butcher knife, a decapitation by battery electric knife and an ultra-realistic torso mutilation with a machete. The film takes the form of a black comedy, and is really quite funny.

An old woman, Mrs. Pringle, and her post-adolescent, imbecilic son run "The Little Wig Shop," which specializes in offering wigs made of 100% human hair. They also offer rooms for rent to local college girls who later have a habit of disappearing from sight. Well, almost. The film's heroine decides to do some amateur sleuthing because her friends have disappeared and despite the protests of her boyfriend, who fears for her safety, she manages to solve the crime.

What's been happening (as if you didn't know) is that the coeds are being killed and scalped by the slow-witted son in


IN GHASTLY COLOR!
The Gruesome Twosome
THE SCREEN SEEPS WITH CARNAGE IN THE MOST BARBARIC HUMOR SINCE THE GUILLOTINE WENT OUT OF STYLE!
THINK YOU'VE SEEN BLOOD AND GORE?
THINK YOU'VE SEEN WILD, WAY-OUT HUMOR?
THINK YOU'VE SEEN STOMACH-RETCHING MUTILATION?
You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet!

8

100% HUMAN HAIR
WIGS for SALE

9

8 **A college coed nervously fiddles with her hair as she inquires about a room for rent. Mrs. Pringle (Elizabeth Davis) can hardly contain herself, thinking how good the hair will look in her wig shop. The young woman will also suffer a torso mutilation, which is foreshadowed by her bare midriff costume.**

9 **A prospective customer peers through the window of The Little Wig Shop. Little does she know that she will soon be donating instead of buying. From Lewis' "comedy of barbaric humor,"** ***The Gruesome Twosome.***

10 **This young woman is about to lose her head, literally, in the famous battery electric knife decapitation scene. Note the gore already spilling from her neck.**

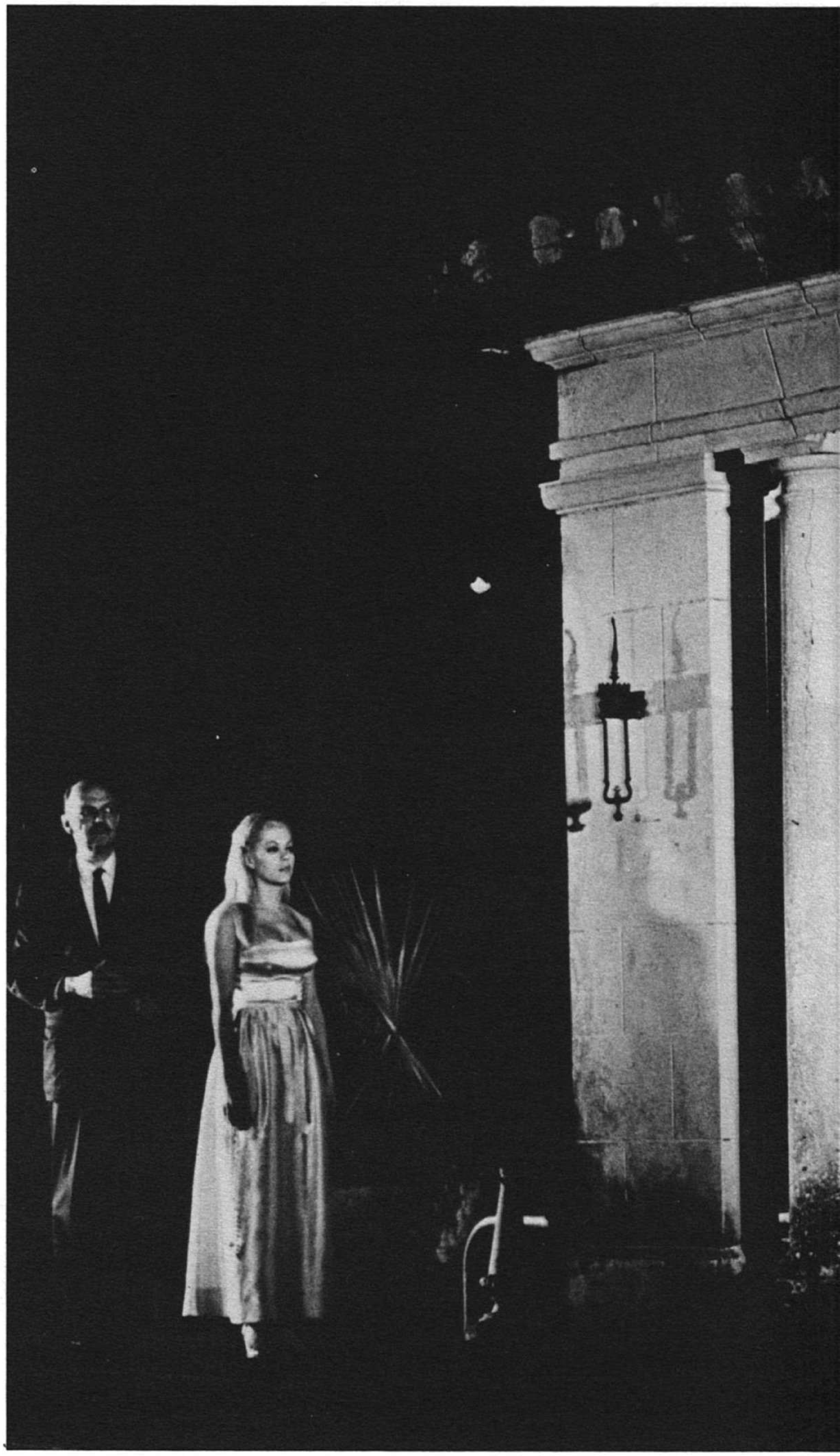
## *Oh, Yes . . . Our Wigs Are Made from Genuine Human Hair . . . And How!*

10

order to provide fresh hair for the wigs sold in the shop. The decapitation occurs when the mother makes her son a gift of a battery electric knife for "being such a good boy." The torso mutilation follows shortly thereafter and is wittily foreshadowed by the victim's being dressed in a bare midriff costume. In this scene, the lunatic son disembowels her and extracts her liver and kidneys, ostensibly to feed them to his pet cat. But the cat is really a dead, stuffed bobcat named Napoleon with whom Mrs. Pringle constantly converses; so you can see how far over the edge they truly are.

These scenes of scalping and dismemberment are the epitome of Herschell Lewis' gore effects. They are authentic looking to an unbelievable degree and are shot in unblinking close-ups with a minimum of cutaways and represent the very best in pre-Dick Smith and Tom Savini gore make-ups.

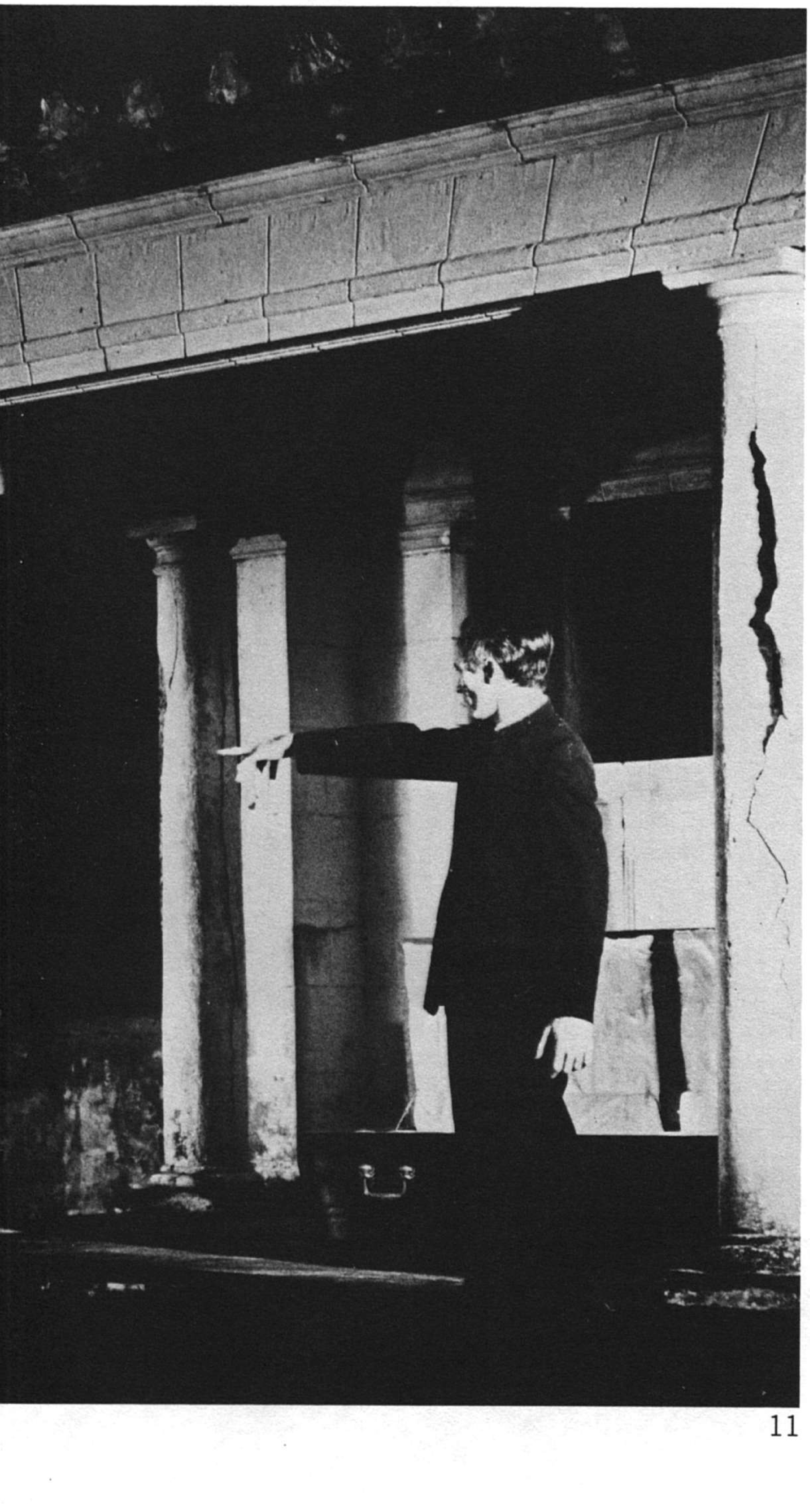
Beside these brilliantly gruesome



blood and guts effects, the rest of the picture comes up a little short, though amusing. Perhaps it is by design that most of the scenes served up to the audience in between murders—the coeds in their baby doll pajamas eating fried chicken, the hero passing the time at night stock car races, as well as the heroine's bumbling attempts to solve the murder mystery, and even the scenes between the demented mother and her intrepid but wigged out son—are treated lightly, as comic relief.

The film climaxes when the heroine herself almost falls victim to the homicidal hair gatherers. But she saves herself at the last moment by plunging a long, sharp wig pin into the son's eye. Her boyfriend and the police arrive, and the film ends happily. For her anyway.

One interesting behind-the-scenes production story from *The Gruesome Twosome* concerns Lewis' innovative reversal of the traditional filmmaking method



11

11 **Vampire John Stone and vampire hunter Howard Helsing (Otto Schlesinger) battle for the soul of Stone's wife, Helene (Elizabeth Wilkinson). From *A Taste of Blood* (1967).**

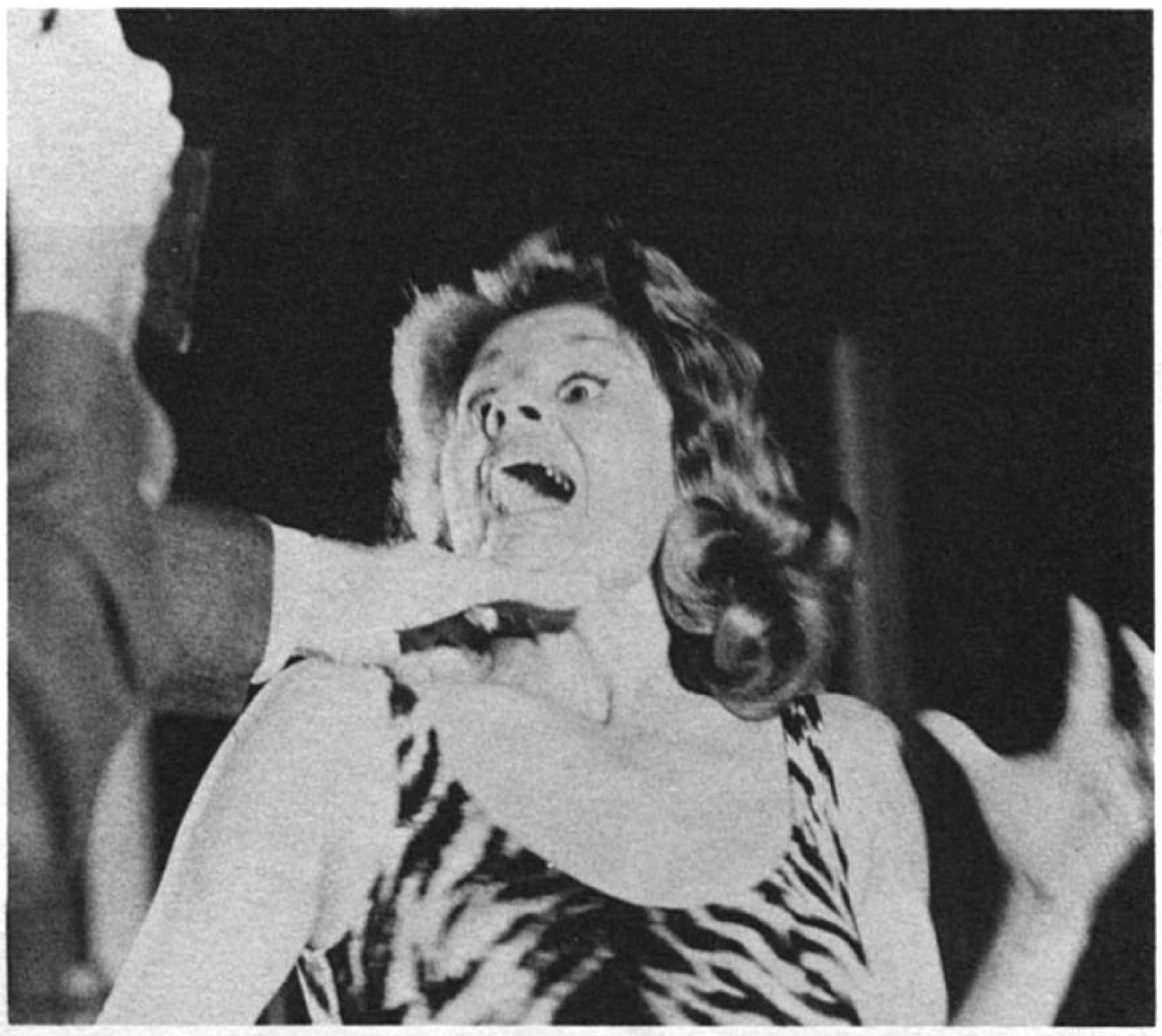
of shooting day for night to accomplish night scenes. Under pressure to return to Chicago for a business matter, Lewis had to complete some day scenes quickly. The problem was, he could only shoot them at night. And so he concentrated every available lighting unit he could lay his hands on onto the small exteriors he intended to shoot, careful at all times to avoid letting the sky show in the frame. I have seen the final result many times and have never been able to spot a difference between the film's day for day scenes and those shot night for day.

Lewis returned to Chicago thinking the film was finished, but when the editing was completed, the picture's running time came up a little short for a feature length film. Undaunted, Herschell assembled four members of the cast in Chicago and shot an intentionally hilarious filler sequence that takes place at a drive-in. In it, the hero and heroine take some time out in between sleuthing to go to

12 **Shooting a subjective shot of the murder of Sherri Morris (Dolores Carlos). Note the lens hood of the Cineflex camera upper left. Knowing how much Lewis himself shot on his pictures, it's probably his hand and arm.**

13 **Another view of the murder of Sherri Morris.**

12



13

14 **Stone finally emulates his ancestor's demise by having the requisite stake plunged through his heart.**

14

a movie with another couple. What they see is a parody of a typical foreign art film in which a man and a woman are seen sitting at dinner, but their faces are not included in the frame. The woman does most of the talking, trying to induce the man into pledging his love. And all the while she is cajoling him, her male dinner companion is belching, burping and otherwise slobbering through his meal—perhaps trying to drown her out. Herschell also added a prologue to the picture consisting of a satiric conversation between two styrofoam wigheads with cut-out paper faces on them.

These short additions brought the film up to Herschell's desired running time of 72 minutes and remain today two of the highpoints of *The Gruesome Twosome*.

# CHAPTER NINE

# *Back to back and bigtime*

**With the exception of *Blood Feast, She-Devils on Wheels* (1968) would have to be considered Herschell Lewis' most financially successful film. It played saturation bookings (30-40 theatres) in Chicago and across the country on a double bill with American-International's *Born Losers* (1968), the Tom Laughlin bike picture which introduced his character of Billy Jack to the screen. I remember seeing *She-Devils* at a drive-in, my first ever exposure to a Lewis film, and being impressed by its lean, tough picture of an amoral subculture of sex and violence. Compared to the overly studied "punch-em-up" theatrics of *Born Losers, She-Devils* had a gritty, documentary feel, an objective reality to it that was quite powerful.**

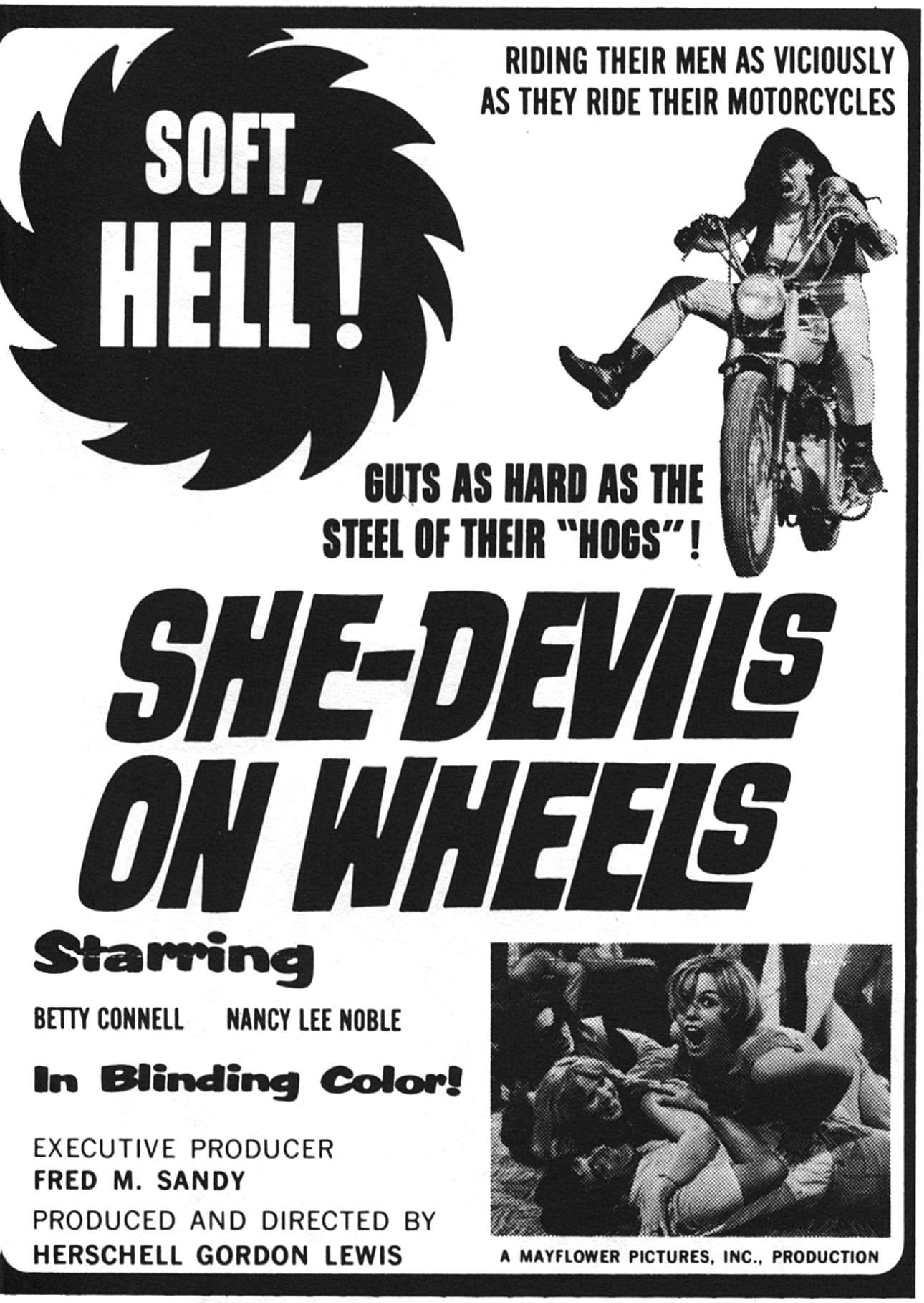
I found out later that there was a very good reason for the picture's documentary-like flavor. Allison Louise Downe, who had written the screenplay, had used her experience as a former Miami probation officer to cast the picture. All the film's female gang members—with the exception of Chicago actresses Nancy Lee Noble, a Lewis regular, and Christie Wagner—were actual members of the Female Cut-throats Division of the Iron Cross biker gang out of Miami—tough cookies all, and yet Herschell got along quite well with them.

*She-Devils on Wheels* tells the story of Karen, an apparently normal, staid young woman who, on weekends, becomes a member of an outlaw female motorcycle gang, the Man-eaters. Led by Queen, a sexy but brutal woman who rides a huge Harley, the Man-eaters run weekly races on an abandoned airport runway. The races are held to decide who will get first pick from the "stud line," a group of men who allow themselves to be used as sexual playthings by the Man-eaters. Karen, Queen, and Whitey (an immense, rowdy woman) are usually the top contenders, and on this occasion Karen turns out to be the winner, so she picks Bill, a stud she has chosen several times before. This violates a major tenet of the Man-eaters' code: no emotional attachments. So Queen calls a special meeting of the gang to decide Karen's punishment. And later the gang sends Honey-pot, the gang mascot, to tell Karen to meet them all at the airstrip that night. When Karen arrives, the gang presents her with a dazed and beaten Bill, as well as a choice: drag Bill around the strip behind her bike or be beaten up herself and expelled from the gang. Tearfully Karen makes her choice. She drags Bill over the cement runway until he is a raw, bleeding mess.

A few nights later, Honey-pot is initiated as a full-fledged member of the Man-eaters. She is stripped to her bra and panties and annointed with chocolate syrup and axle grease, then left, much to her delight, to entertain the entire "stud line." Meanwhile, the rest of the gang

1

1 Whitey (Pat Poston) shows off her muscles to her fellow Man-eaters in *She-Devils on Wheels* (1968).



SOFT, HELL!

RIDING THEIR MEN AS VICIOUSLY AS THEY RIDE THEIR MOTORCYCLES

GUTS AS HARD AS THE STEEL OF THEIR "HOGS"!

SHE-DEVILS ON WHEELS

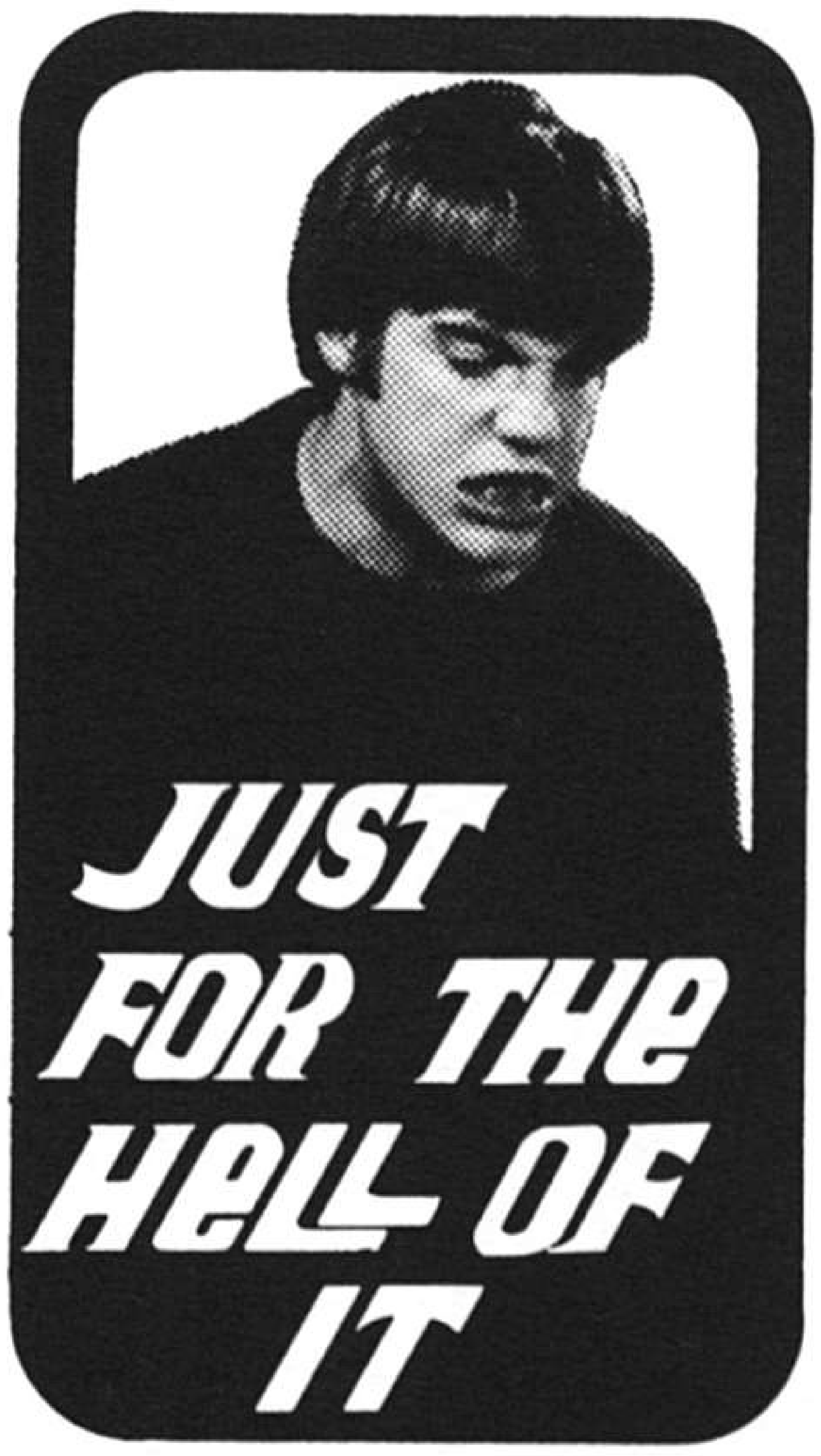
Starring

BETTY CONNELL NANCY LEE NOBLE

In Blinding Color!

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
FRED M. SANDY
PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY
HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS

A MAYFLOWER PICTURES, INC., PRODUCTION


JUST FOR THE HELL OF IT

rides off to a nearby town to raise some hell and terrorize the citizenry. Later the police are helpless in making an arrest because no one in the town will testify against the Man-eaters for fear of being killed by them.

When the gang returns to the airport the next weekend, they find it taken over by a male hot-rod gang led by the mean and ruthless Joe-boy. A brutal fight erupts between the two gangs, which the Man-eaters win. The next day, Karen is phoned by her former boyfriend, Ted. He tells her that Joe-boy's gang has vowed revenge against the Man-eaters; for her own safety, he tries to persuade her to leave the group, but she demurs, saying that she's in too deep.

Returning victoriously from a race that afternoon, Karen is amazed to find Ted in the "stud line." She picks him and they go off together, at which time he tells her that Joe-boy is planning an all-out attack. They split. What they don't know

2 **Queen (Betty Connell), the leader of the pack, reclines on her Harley Hog in the Man-eaters' clubhouse. The set was built in an abandoned movie theatre for Lewis' *She-Devils on Wheels* (1968).**

3 **The results of the brutal beating inflicted on Honey-pot (Nancy Lee Noble), the Man-eaters' mascot, by Joe-boy and his gang.**

4 **The Man-eaters go on the rampage, terrorizing the citizens of a small town.**

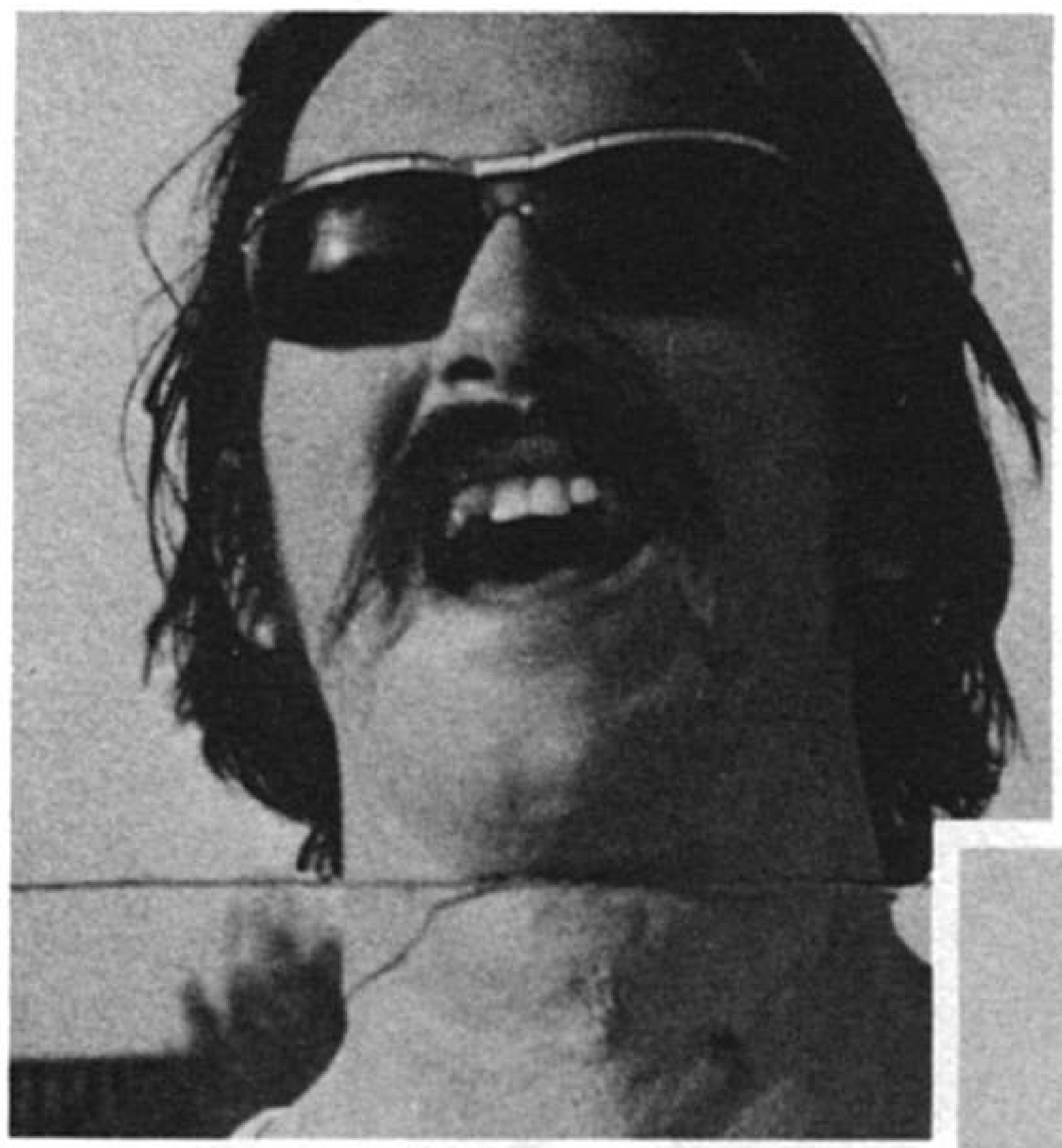
2

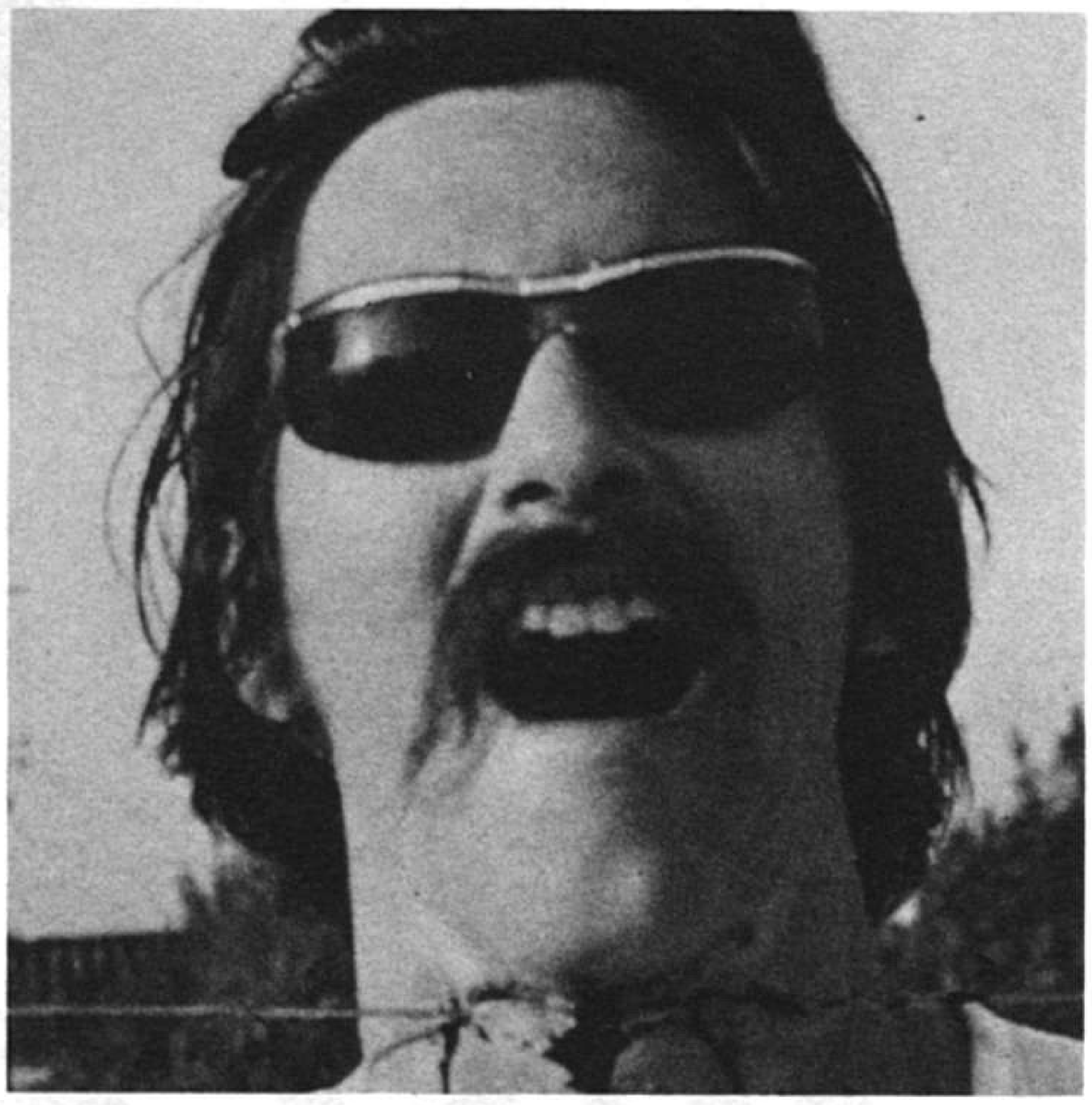
3

is that the cowardly Joe-boy is really planning to destroy the Man-eaters one by one. His gang starts by kidnapping Honey-pot. The next morning, the bruised, lacerated body of the unconscious Honey-pot is pushed from a moving hot-rod onto Queen's doorstep. Attached to her is a note threatening the other gang members with a similar fate. Queen swears vengeance, and the entire gang sets out to get Joe-boy. The Man-eaters wreck a local bar frequented by Joe-boy in an effort to learn his whereabouts. When Joe-boy is spotted at a local restaurant, Man-eaters Whitey and Terry approach alone on their cycles, calling him out, while the rest of the gang hangs back. Whitey slashes the tires of Joe-boy's hot-rod, and when he tries to retaliate, sprays him in the face with a can of insecticide. Then both women jump on Whitey's cycle and speed away. Joe-boy jumps on Terry's cycle and follows them in hot pursuit, not knowing that the gang

PIZZA · CHICKEN
BILL HARRIS
TAKE OUT FOODS

4

5


6


7

8

5 **The wire strung across the road by the Man-eaters strikes the neck of Joe-boy as he rides by on Terry's motorcycle.**

6 **Blood spurts as the wire slices through his neck.**

7 **Joe-boy meets his gory demise. Note his severed head lower right and Queen's forgotten chain belt just below his waist.**

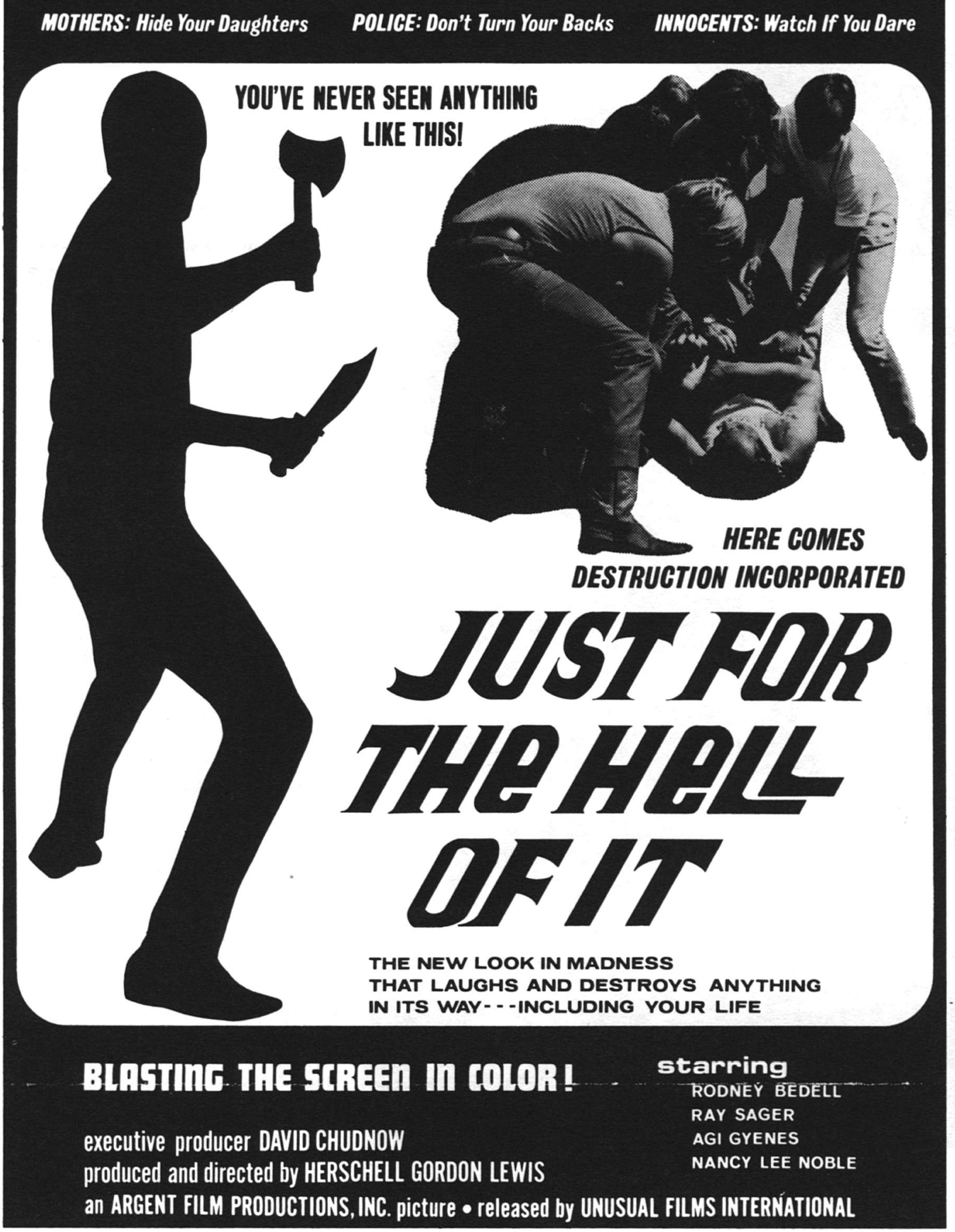
8 **"Go fumigate yourself, crap-head!" Whitey (Pat Poston) yells as she blasts Joe-boy (John Weymer) in the face with bug spray.**

has laid a trap—they've strung a wire across the road neck-high, which Joe-boy doesn't see until it's too late. The wire slices through his neck like butter, clipping off his head. Queen is elated, unaware that she has lost her distinctive chain belt at the scene of the crime.

The gang returns to its clubhouse, where Ted is waiting. He tries once more to talk Karen into leaving the gang, but she tells him that it's too late: she is a Man-eater, like it or not. Ted is left alone as the gang roars off down the road.

Having found Queen's belt, the police are waiting to arrest her when the gang returns to the airport. Will this be the end of the Man-eaters? Not on your life—and it just might be if you ever meet up with them. Because of a lack of concrete evidence, the gang is freed. In the film's final scene, Queen and Whitey address the camera and recite the following verse:

"We don't owe nobody nothin'



**MOTHERS:** *Hide Your Daughters* **POLICE:** *Don't Turn Your Backs* **INNOCENTS:** *Watch If You Dare*

YOU'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS!

HERE COMES DESTRUCTION INCORPORATED

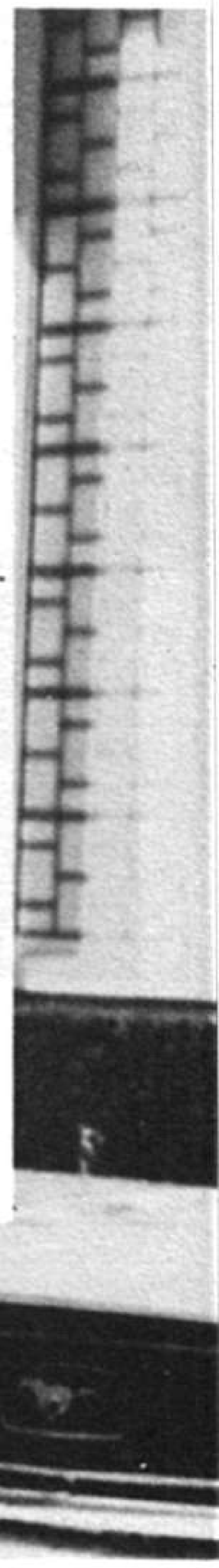
# JUST FOR THE HELL OF IT

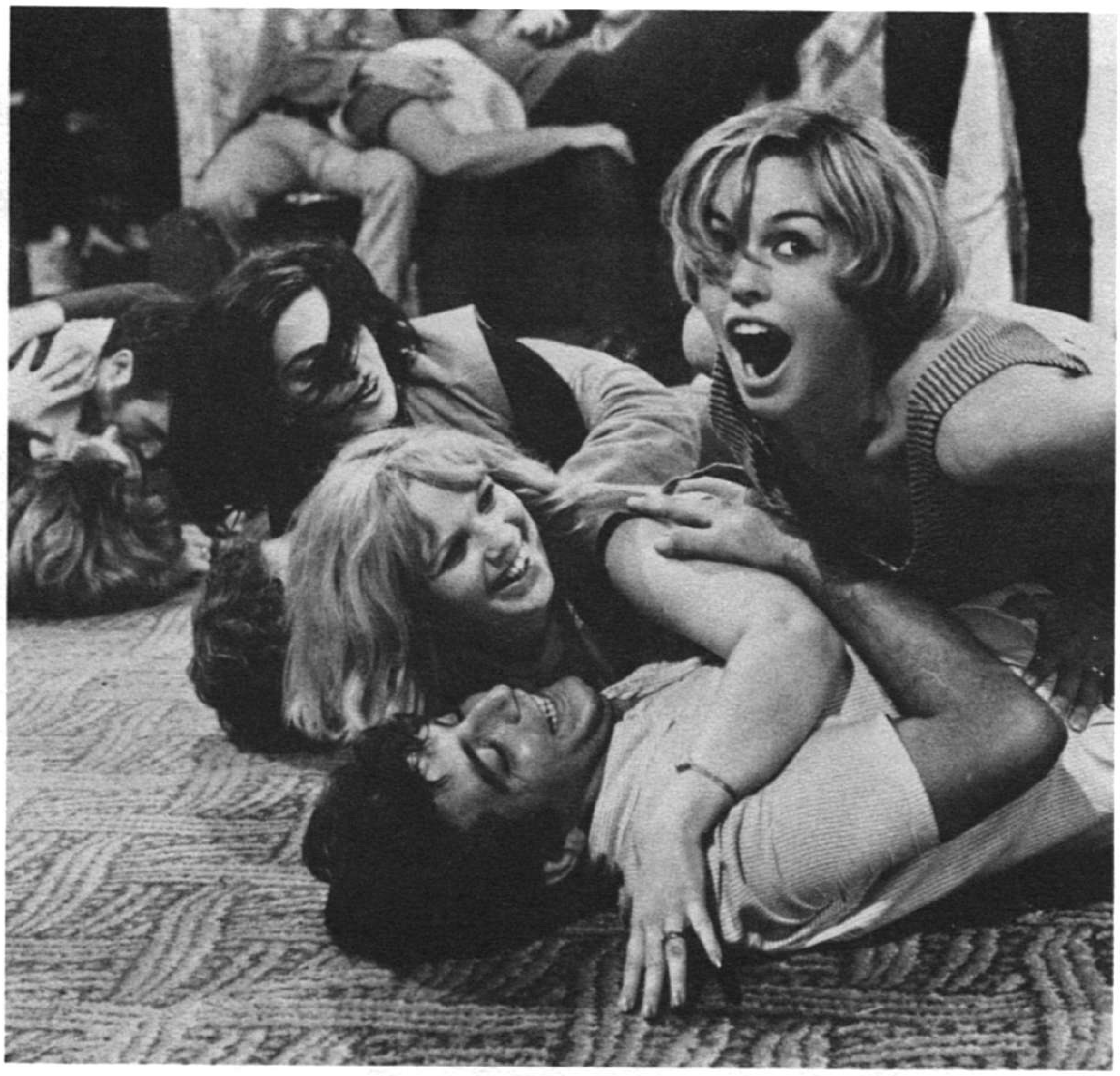
THE NEW LOOK IN MADNESS THAT LAUGHS AND DESTROYS ANYTHING IN ITS WAY---INCLUDING YOUR LIFE

**BLASTING THE SCREEN IN COLOR!**

starring
RODNEY BEDELL
RAY SAGER
AGI GYENES
NANCY LEE NOBLE

executive producer DAVID CHUDNOW
produced and directed by HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS
an ARGENT FILM PRODUCTIONS, INC. picture • released by UNUSUAL FILMS INTERNATIONAL





9

10

NANCE
YOUR
AUTO
WITH THE
FIRST
TIONAL
BANK
OUTH MIAMI
MR PAYNE
MR. HOOPER
TALLMENT
DEPARTMENT

**9** **The Man-eaters have the time of their lives in an orgy with the men from the "stud line." Note: most of the women are on top.**

**10** **Denny sends a police officer's helmet flying as Dexter (Ray Sager) looks on, in *Just for the Hell of It* (1968).**

And we don't make no deals.
We're swinging chicks on motors.
We're Man-eaters on wheels."

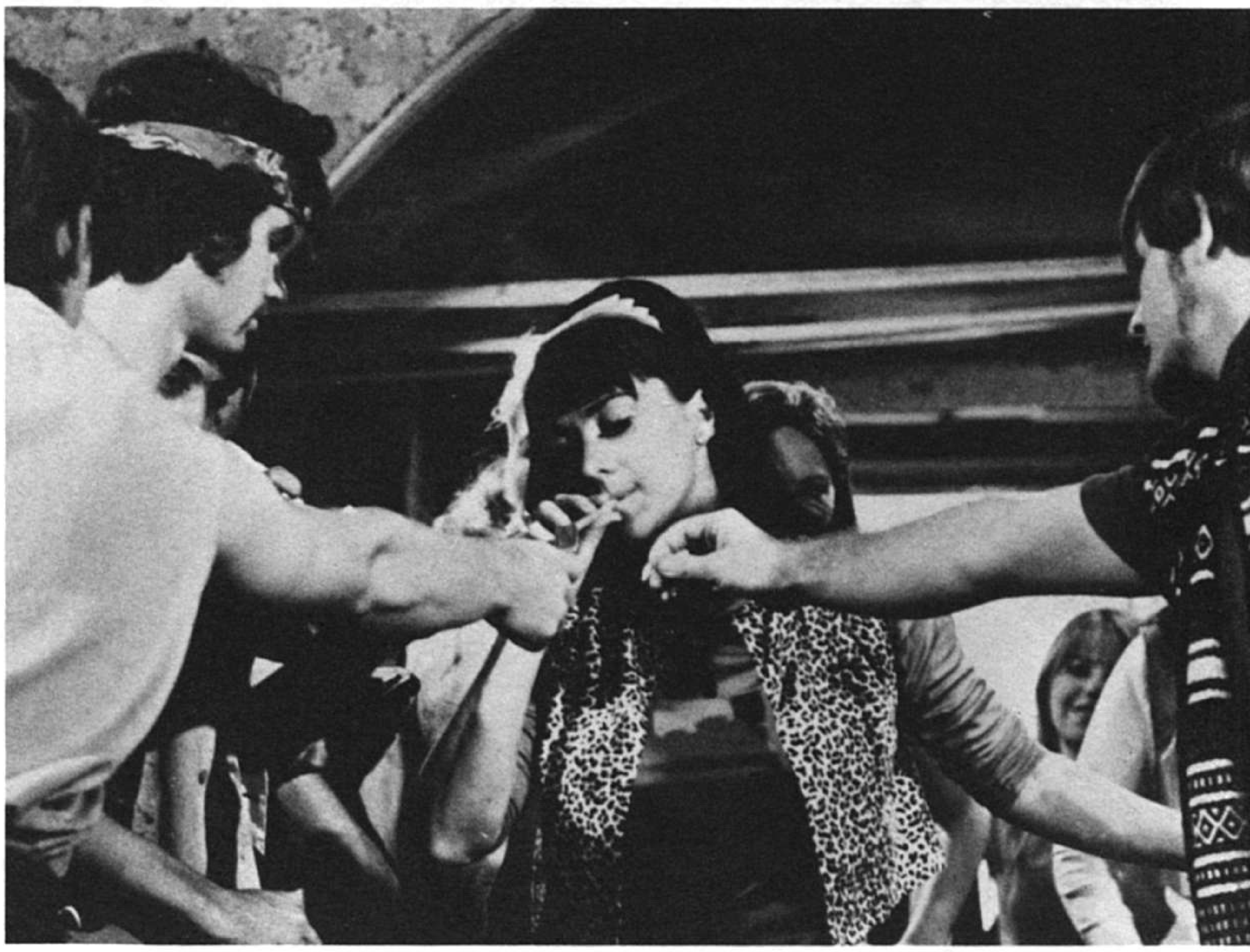
And then they speed off as the song "Get Off the Road"—words by Lewis under his pseudonym of Sheldon Seymour and music by his son, Robert—fills the sound track. *She-Devils on Wheels* thus ends cynically. Prefiguring the cynicism of the post-Watergate era, the scales have been tipped to show that in some cases crime does pay.

Incredibly enough, while Herschell was shooting *She-Devils,* he was also shooting another feature back to back. Much less well known and less widely distributed, *Just for the Hell of It,* shot by the same crew, using many of the same actors and with a script by the same author, is a variation on the same gang theme.

It's about Destruction, Inc., a teenage gang led by Dexter, Denny and their girlfriend Bitsy, who get their kicks from vandalism. At a party in an expensive sub-

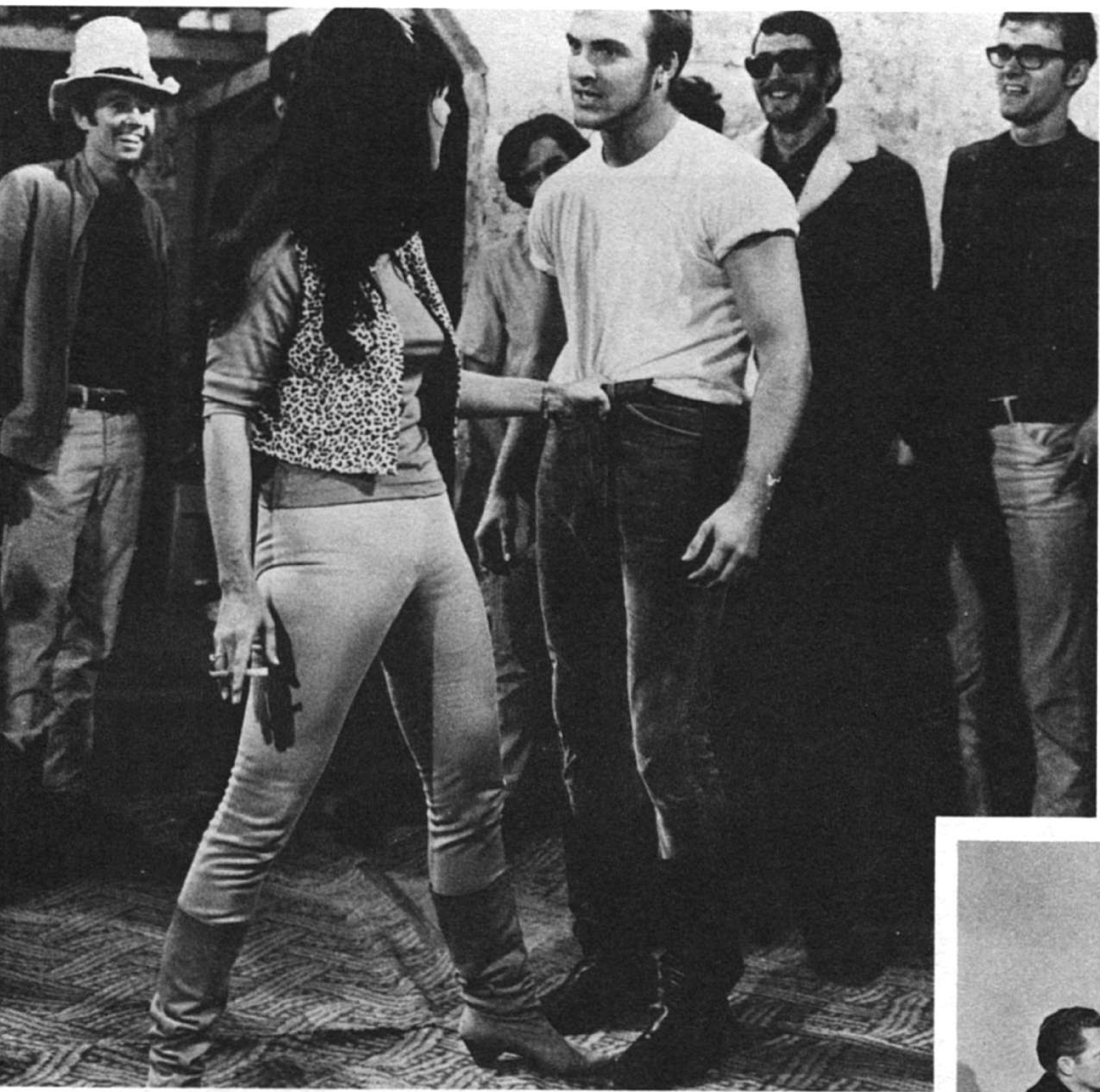
11 **When Queen (Betty Connell), leader of the Man-eaters, needs a light, every male present hops to — or else.**

12 **Destruction Inc. throws a house wrecking party. Your host and hostess are Dexter (Ray Sager, far left foreground) and Bitsy (Nancy Lee Noble, far right). From Lewis' teenage vandalism flick, *Just for the Hell of It* (1968).**

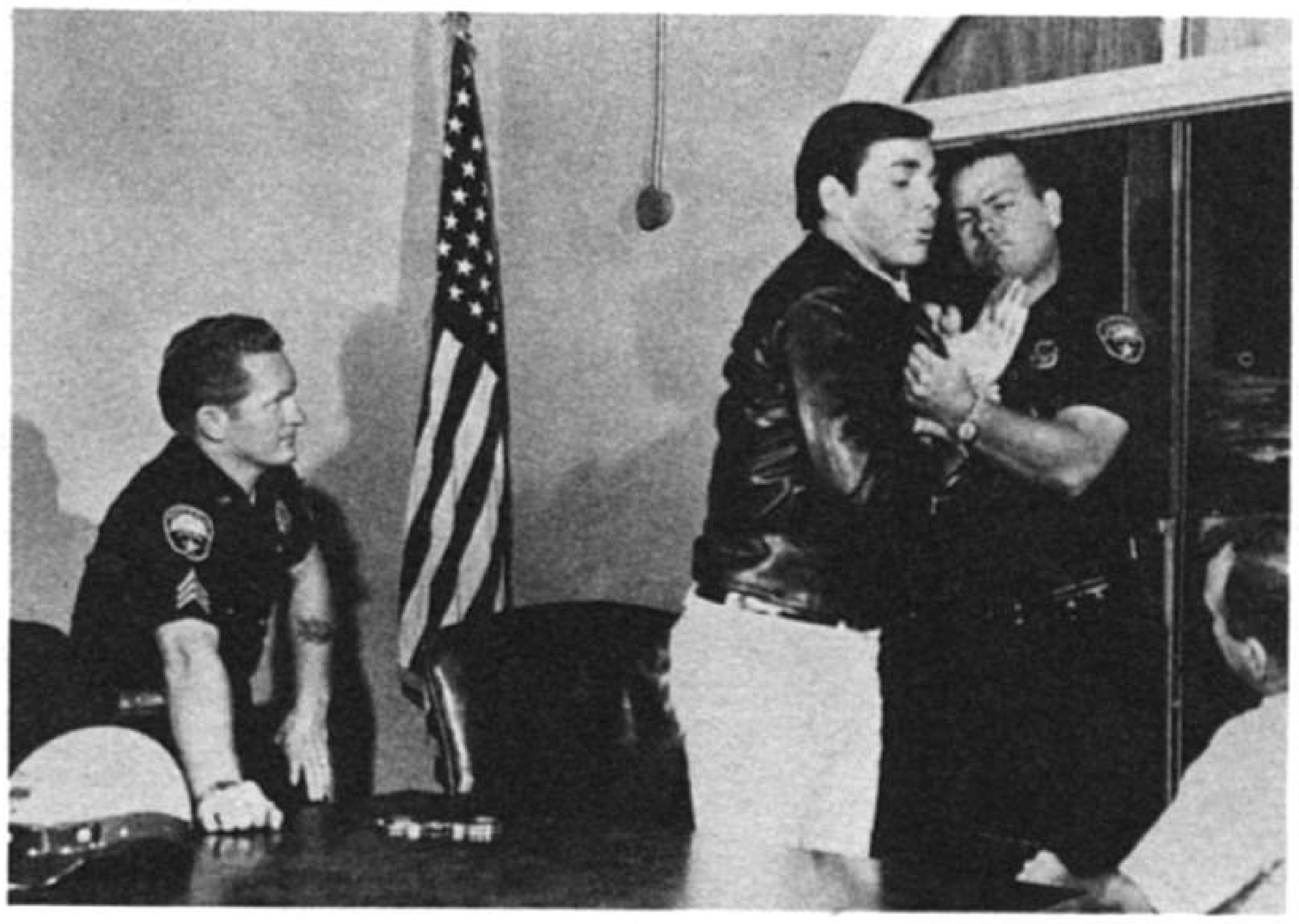


11

12



13



14

13 **Queen makes her choice from the "stud line."**

14 **The local police have just about had their fill of smart-mouth Dexter, but they have no evidence to hold him.**

15 **A leering Dexter eyes Bitsy, the teen-queen sexpot of Lewis' teenage destruction epic *Just for the Hell of It.***

15

urban home, a goldfish bowl is dumped over the head of Lummox, a gang member whose name tells all. He in turn flings the bowl through a plate-glass mirror, signaling that the destruction is to begin. Boys and girls join in, smashing and defacing everything until nothing in the home has been left untouched.

The next day, Denny makes fun of a young man named Doug. Dexter warns Denny that Doug is a good fighter who is not afraid of the gang. But Denny vows to get him nonetheless. When Doug and his girlfriend Jeanne visit a restaurant where the gang hangs out, Denny sends Bitsy to drop a cigarette into Jeanne's coffee, to flirt with Doug and to pass it on that Dexter wants to talk. Dexter tells Doug that he had better "watch it!" because Denny is really teed off at him. When Doug scoffs, Denny breaks a bottle and attacks him with it. Doug trounces Denny in the vicious fight that follows, but when the restaurant owner yells, "Hey,

**16** Queen helps to annoint Honey-Pot (Nancy Lee Noble) with chocolate syrup and axle grease during her initiation into the Man-eaters, whose motto is: "Sex, guts, blood and all men are mothers!"

**17** Because of her continued romantic interest in Bill (David Harris), a violation of the Man-eaters' code, Karen (Christie Wagner) is forced by gang members to redeem herself by dragging Bill around the airport runway behind her cycle. This is the result.

16

17

1 2866
67 FLA 68

you're wrecking my place!" the gang takes him at his word and everyone joins in to demolish the restaurant. When the owner threatens to call the police, the gang drags him over to the grill and fries his hand.

Dexter is picked up by the police, but no one will testify against him and he is soon released. Smirking, he sends the gang on a rampage of destruction: a man who is painting his house is covered with paint and the words "Fuzz Go Home" scrawled on his home; a woman's laundry is ground into the dirt; another is squirted with her own garden hose; a man and a woman passing by in their car are doused with paint; a woman's newspaper is set aflame as she is reading it; a handicapped man is battered with his own crutch, and a blind man's cane is stolen from him and he is pushed helplessly into oncoming traffic. Finally a baby carriage is destroyed and the baby put in a garbage can. No doubt about it, this bunch makes

**18 "There was a policeman so thin / who wanted to run us all in / In the hullabaloo / he ran us all through / without even breaking the skin," poetizes Whitey in a confrontation with the cops.**

**19 Bitsy and Dexter observe Denny's drugged orgy with some teeny-boppers.**

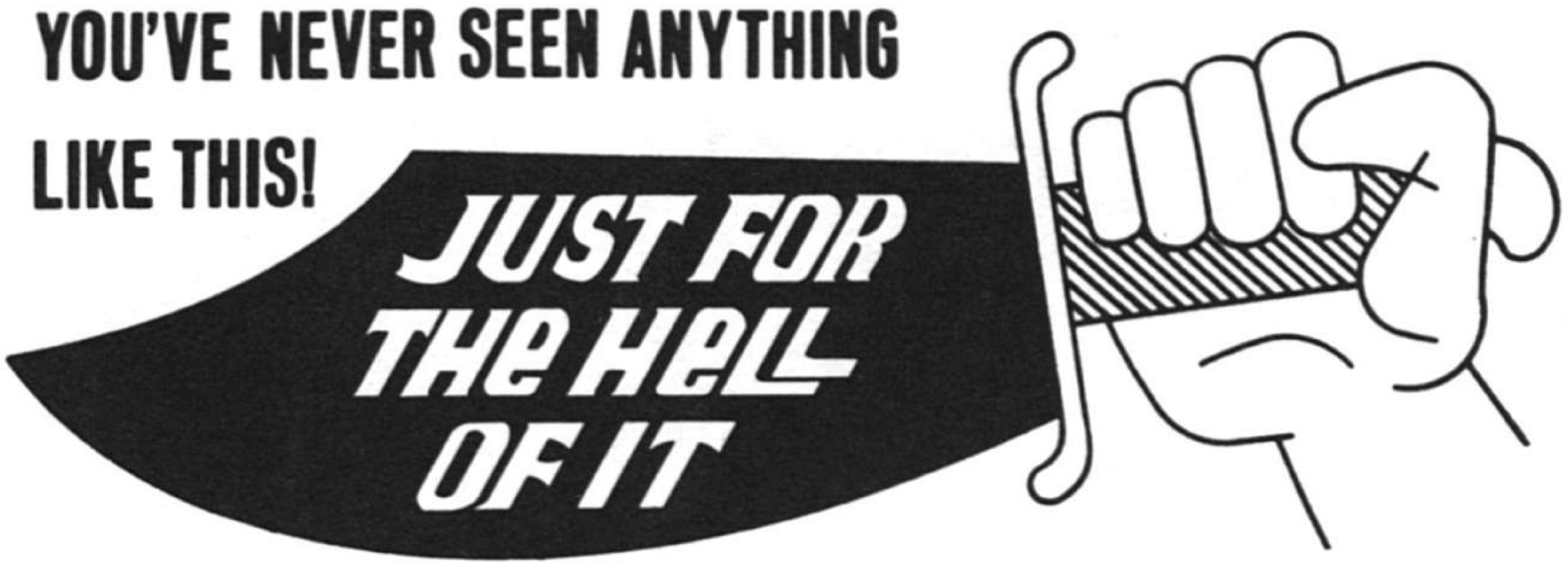
18

19

the Man-eaters look positively sociable by comparison.

The gang then attacks a couple on the beach, assaulting the girl, almost beating the boy to death, then hacking their boat to pieces with an axe. Denny invites some innocent teenyboppers to a party, where they are immediately drugged, assaulted and threatened with death if they ever snitch on the gang. When the gang starts harrassing some small boys at a playground, Doug, who is passing by, intervenes. A confused old lady calls the police and insists that Doug himself started the fight, whereupon Doug is arrested and the gang set free. Again, so much for justice.

Ultimately, Jeanne is threatened by the gang over the phone. Doug, now free, tells Dexter that if Jeanne is ever harmed, he will kill him. But Dexter sends Bitsy over to distract Doug by seducing him. Meanwhile, the gang breaks into Jeanne's apartment and carves a rat on her belly


YOU'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING
LIKE THIS!
JUST FOR THE HELL OF IT

20

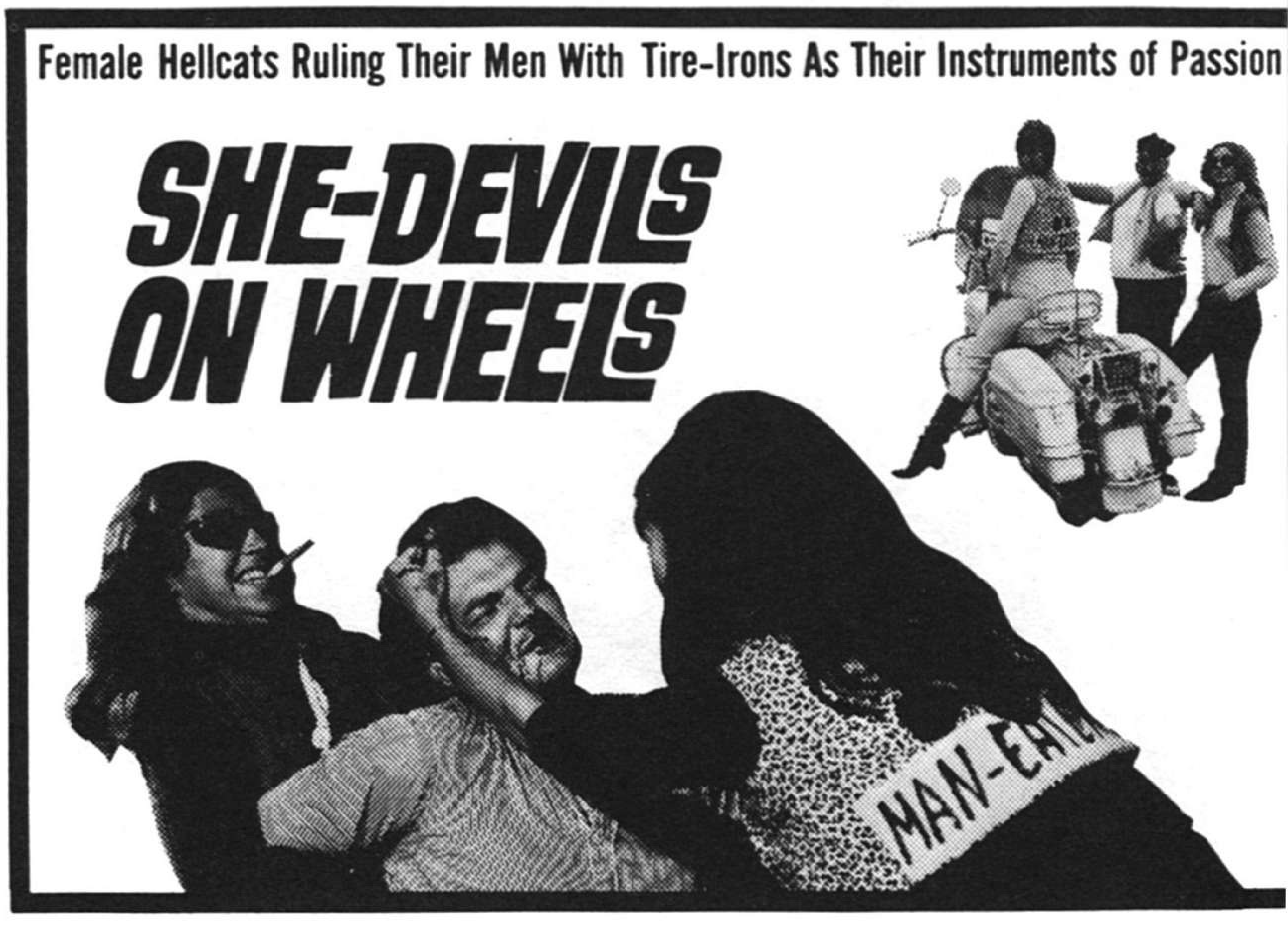
20 **Restless youths on the rampage meet the long arm of the law.**

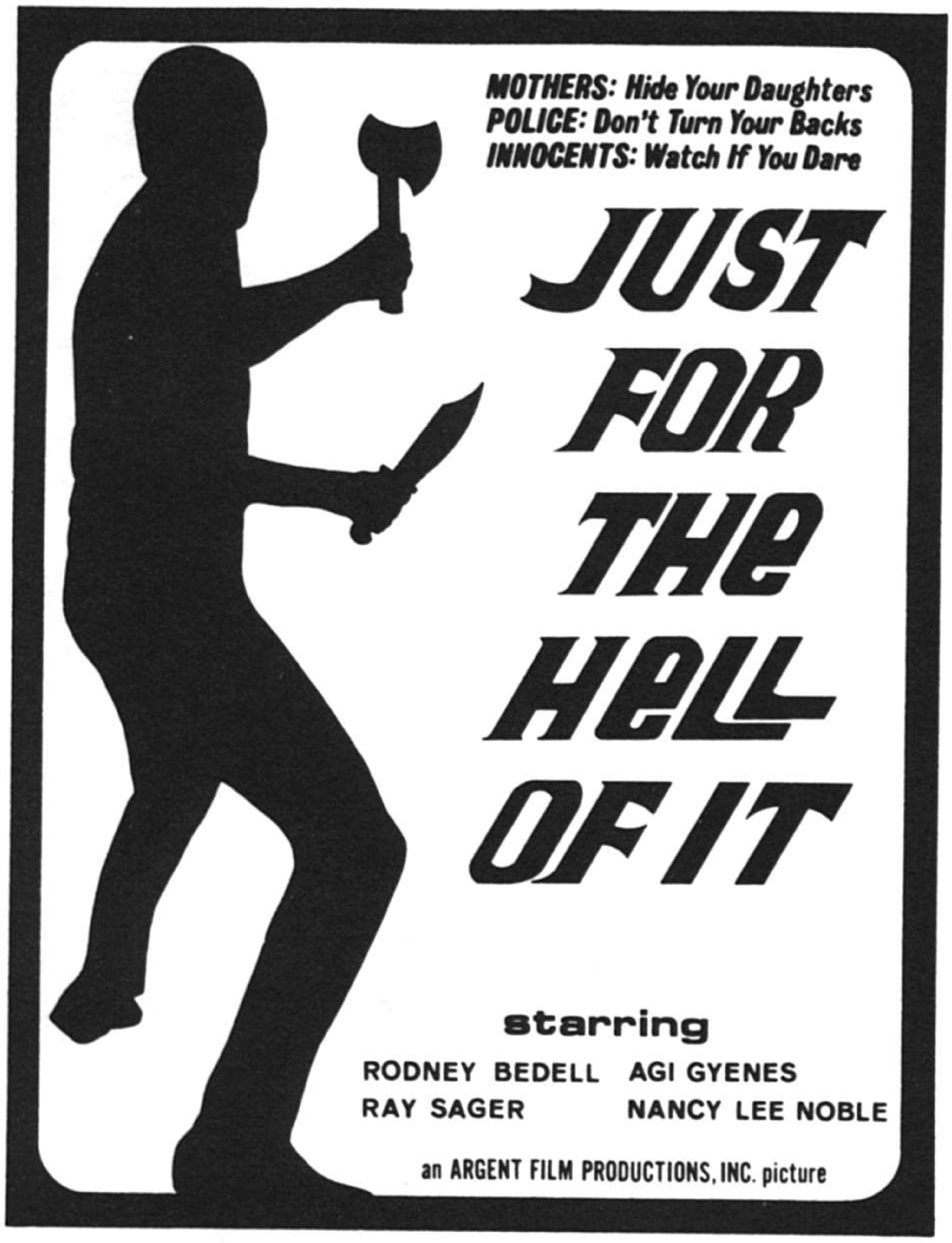
with a knife, leaving her near death.

Doug is not deceived by Bitsy's wiles, however, and forces her to lead him to the gang. The cowardly Dexter hides, so Doug goes after the other gang members, who escape in a car. Denny and Bitsy take off on a motocycle. The chase is joined by the police, who catch and arrest those in the car, but Denny and Bitsy are killed in a fiery crash when their cycle smashes into a telephone pole.

Only Dexter and Lummox escape completely. At the finish, when Lummox, who turns out to be not all that stupid after all, brings up with remorse all the suffering that has been caused by the gang, Dexter only shrugs and sneers, "Who cares!" And he sets out in search of more hell to raise.

While relatively soft-core in their treatment of sex—there isn't any nudity in either film—*Just for the Hell of It* and *She-Devils on Wheels* are definitely hard-core in the violence and gore depart-


Female Hellcats Ruling Their Men With Tire-Irons As Their Instruments of Passion
SHE-DEVILS ON WHEELS
MAN-EA


MOTHERS: Hide Your Daughters
POLICE: Don't Turn Your Backs
INNOCENTS: Watch If You Dare
JUST FOR THE HELL OF IT
starring
RODNEY BEDELL
AGI GYENES
RAY SAGER
NANCY LEE NOBLE
an ARGENT FILM PRODUCTIONS, INC. picture

21 **Bitsy (Nancy Lee Noble) and Denny (Steve White) have the time of their destructive lives fleeing from police on a motorcycle. Moments later they will be killed in a fiery crash.**

21

ment. Add to this their amoral endings and you have two films that are bound for censorship problems. In its initial Chicago run, all the prints of *She-Devils* had the ending where the gang rides off on its merry way excised. It was only after I went to work for Lewis that I was able to see the full uncut version.

I was later involved in screening both pictures for a film buyer from German television, who was interested in getting some independent American product to syndicate overseas. Herschell had warned him beforehand that these two films could *never* be shown on TV, and after seeing them, the buyer, of course, had to agree. Of course, now with video-cassettes and cable coming to the fore to scoop up product, who knows? Maybe some enterprising soul will start an all-gore cable network, and *Just for the Hell of It* and *She-Devils on Wheels* will once again find a home.

**★ THE PSYCHIC ★**
a.k.a.
**★ COPENHAGEN'S PSYCHIC LOVES ★**

# CHAPTER TEN

# *Herschell, me, and the vanity press*

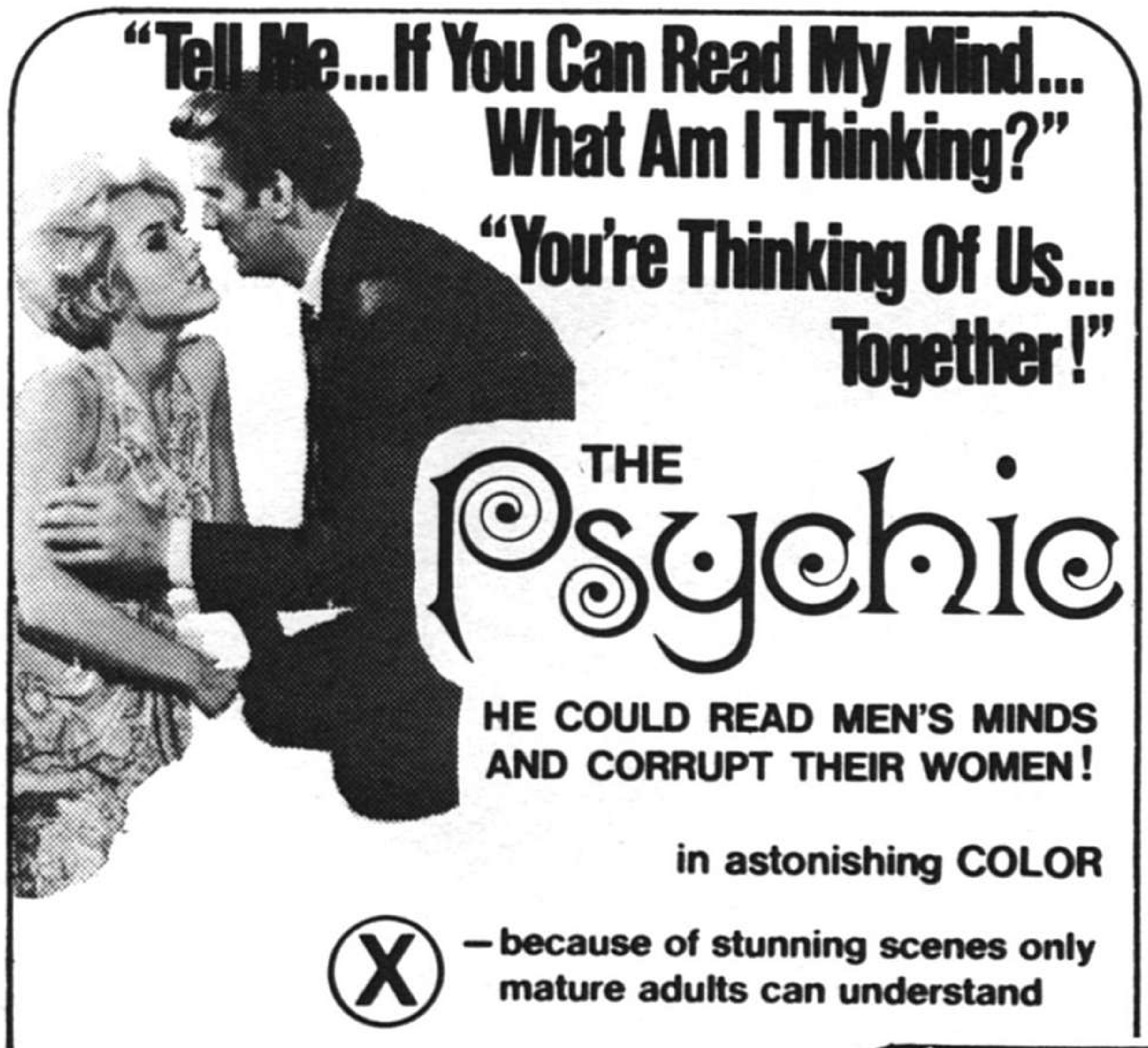
**I first met Herschell Gordon Lewis in the summer of 1968. I was fresh out of college and phoning every producer in the book in an effort to get work in the film business. Jack Gilbreth, a distributor, informed me of Lewis' existence; so I called him and arranged for an interview.**

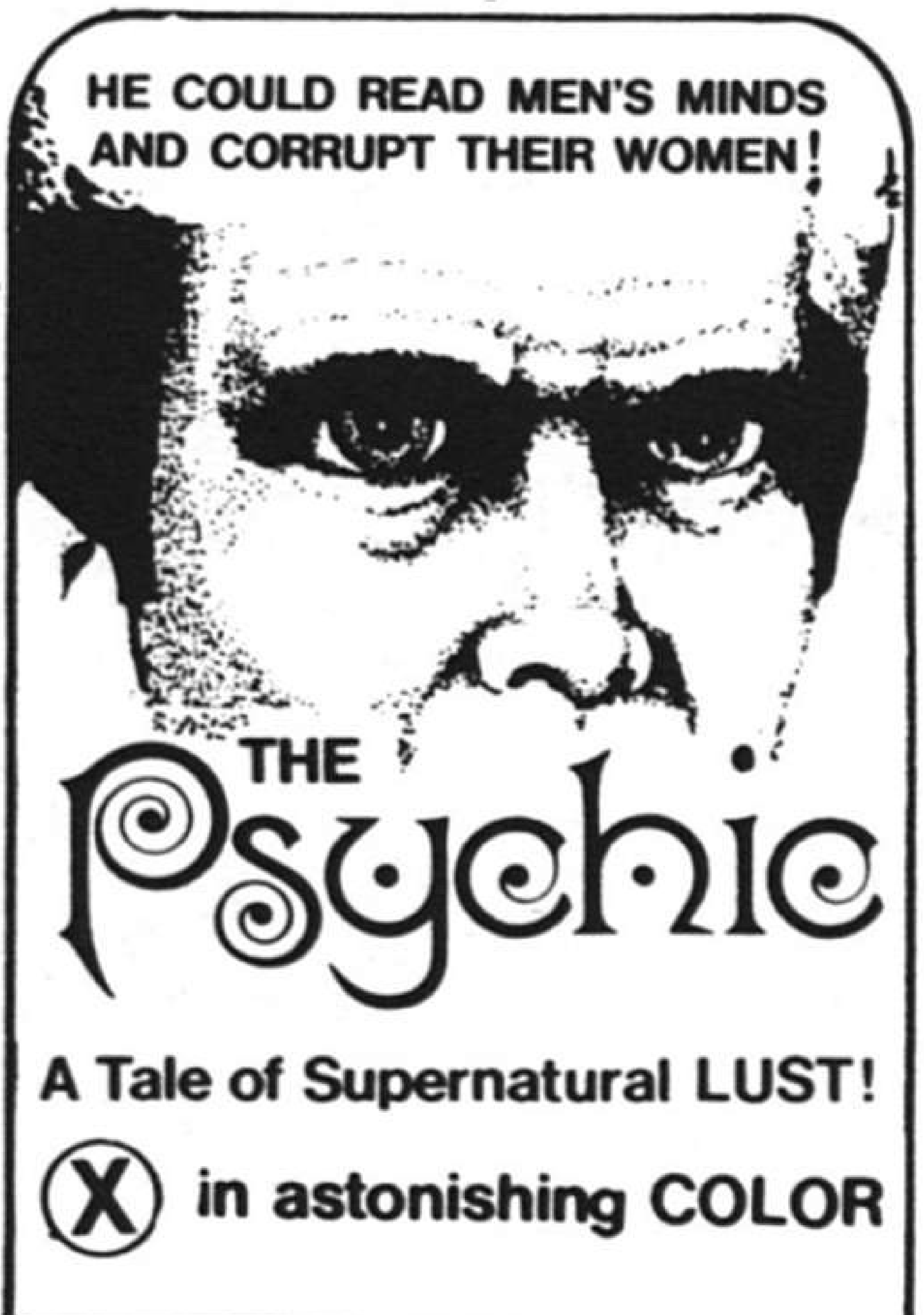
I arrived at the appointed time at Herschell's Creative Communications Company offices at 520 North Michigan Avenue—he would later move to the Wrigley Building. And I introduced myself to his loyal receptionist, Charlotte West. After a short time I was ushered into Herschell's office by a sophisticated blond woman whom I would later learn was Allison Louise Downe, ace scripter of the notorious *Blood Feast*. Herschell stood behind his desk, wearing a snappy three piece suit, a tall, impressive man in his early forties. He greeted me warmly, shaking my hand firmly and asked me to sit down.

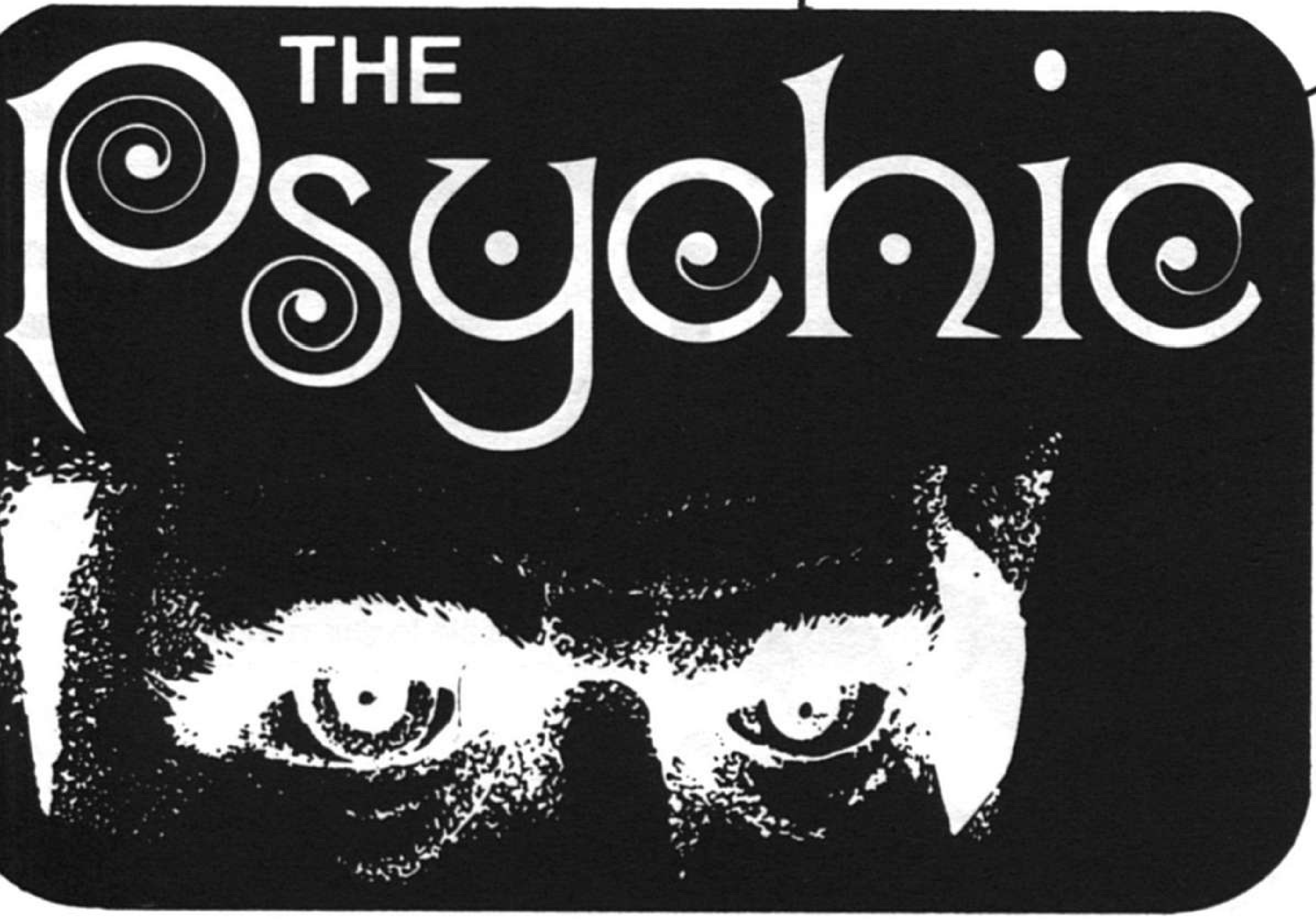
He then asked me about my film experience, which at the time, at least professionally, I had to confess, was almost nil. I told him that I had been shooting my own 8mm films since eighth grade, adding that I was willing to work long, hard hours—for low pay if need be—because I really wanted to learn the film business. Herschell then went on to explain that when working in the film business—a business viewed with suspicion by many people—it was a good idea to look as straight as possible, suggesting that if I was to go to work for him, I would have to be willing to cut my hair and shave my beard. I said that I would.

Herschell explained his operation to me this way: he made inexpensive pictures, he said, with no artistic pretensions, films whose sole purpose were to entertain a specific audience and turn a profit. He added that his films were produced on short, tight schedules, where practicality and speed were valued above aesthetics. He also told me that he sometimes made pictures for other people and on occasion acted as the cinematic equivalent of the vanity press. Finally, he assured me that while nothing was in the works right then that I should definitely keep in touch.

About a month later, I was informed that a production had come up and that I should report for work the following Monday. It turned out that James F. Hurley, Herschell's scripter and partner on *Something Weird*, had written and wanted to produce and direct his own picture on an ESP theme titled *The Psychic*. Hurley, who made up for all the artistic pretensions that Lewis notably lacked, didn't think Herschell had treated ESP with the proper seriousness in their first film together. So he wanted to make this follow up film himself. Still, Hurley was smart enough to realize that he did need Herschell's help—in the form of know-how, equipment and crew—in order to make his picture on the budget he


"Tell Me...If You Can Read My Mind...
What Am I Thinking?"
"You're Thinking Of Us...
Together!"
THE
Psychic
HE COULD READ MEN'S MINDS
AND CORRUPT THEIR WOMEN!
in astonishing COLOR
X
—because of stunning scenes only
mature adults can understand


HE COULD READ MEN'S MINDS
AND CORRUPT THEIR WOMEN!
THE
Psychic
A Tale of Supernatural LUST!
X
in astonishing COLOR


THE
Psychic

1 **Psychic Dan Thomas takes to performing a successful ESP nightclub act with the help of Bobbi, his mistress. Though only minimally a Lewis film, Herschell was responsible for all technical aspects of *The Psychic*'s (1968) production.**

1

had to work with.

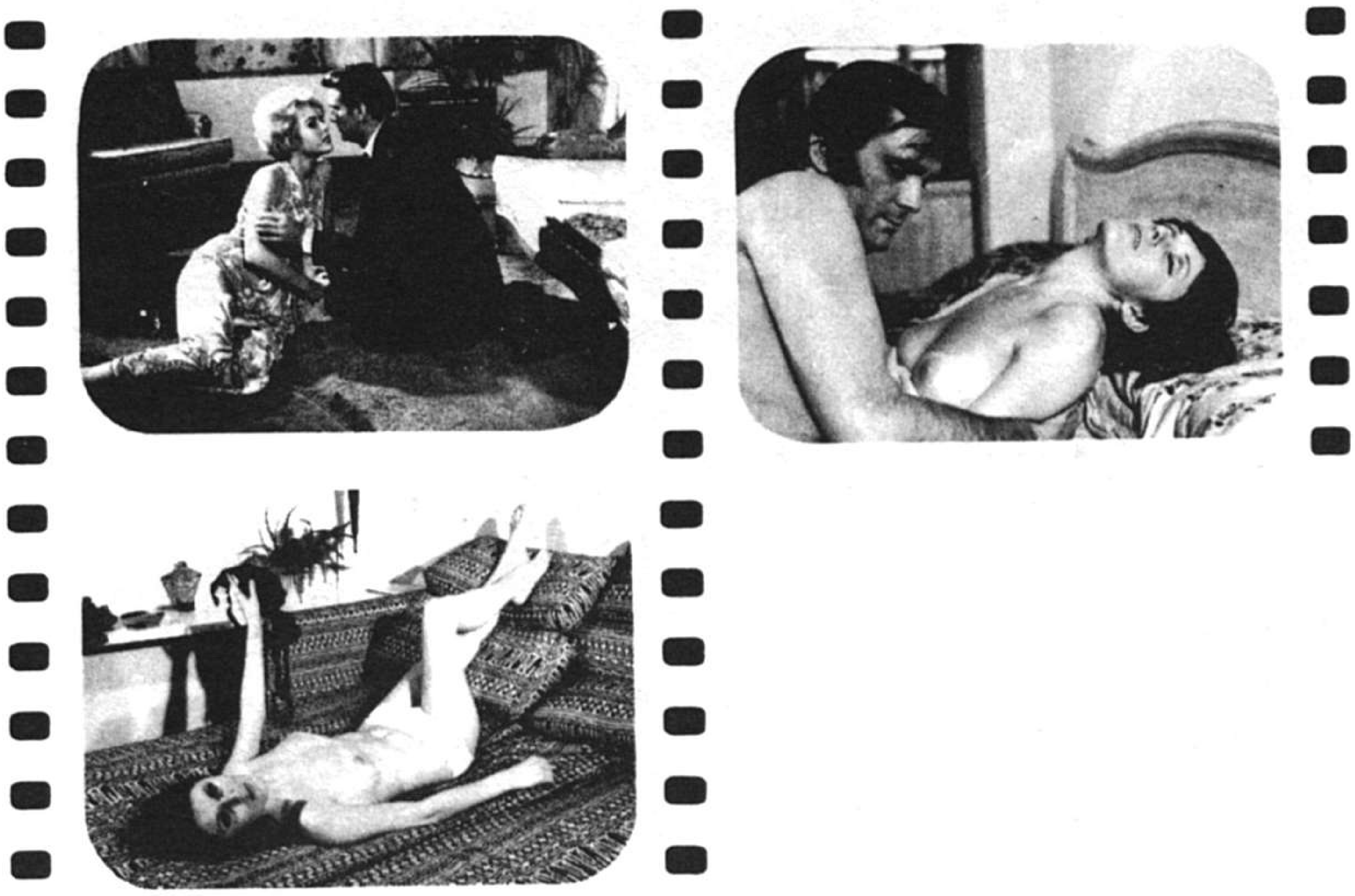
It was at this point that I was formally introduced to Louise Downe, who was to serve as assistant director on the film; to Richard Brinkman, Herschell's editor; and to Eskandar Ameripoor, known as Alex, who served as Lewis' assistant cameraman. Alex was an Iranian by birth; he had come to this country to join the American film industry because of a romantic attraction he had to the films of John Ford, Howard Hawks and John Huston. The closest he ever got was to work for Lewis. After working with Lewis for many years, he became a taxi driver in Los Angeles. Recently he purchased Herschell's Mitchell camera and is nurturing future production plans.

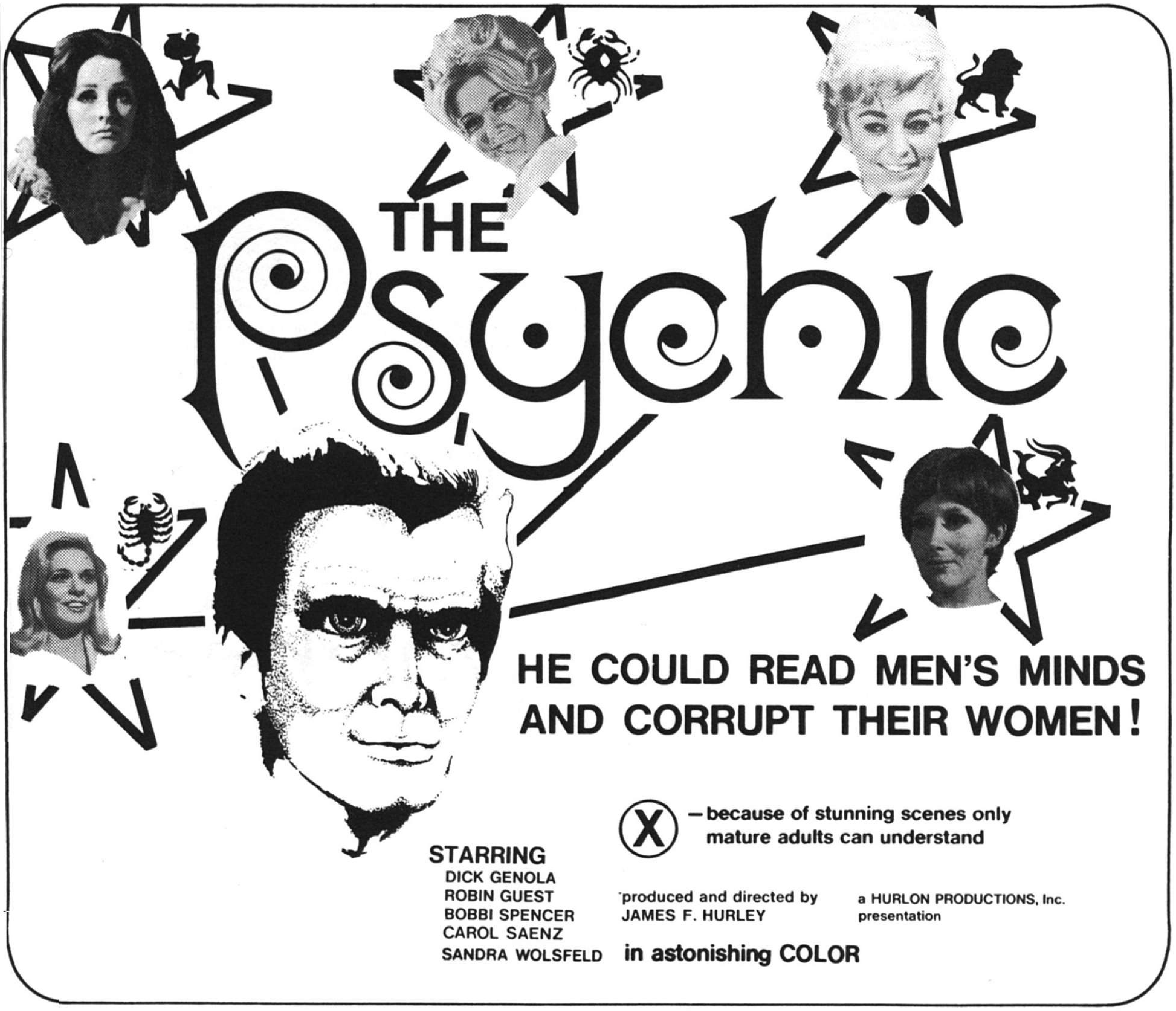
I was then familiarized with Lewis' equipment, starting with the pride and joy of his operation, the 35mm N.C. Mitchell camera that had been the workhorse of Hollywood throughout the thirties, forties and fifties. Lewis also

2 **Psychic Dan Thomas (Dick Genola) leers at the shapely pins of Bobbi (Bobbi Spencer) and foresees himself taking her to bed in the not-too-distant future in *The Psychic* (1968), produced and directed by James F. Hurley and photographed by Herschell Gordon Lewis. The bartender in the background is Lewis' assistant cameraman Alex Ameripoor.**

owned a 35mm Cineflex, an American-made first cousin to the German Arriflex which was used for shooting MOS (Mit Out Sound). Rounding out Herschell's complement of cameras was a 35mm Bell & Howell Eymo, big brother to the Filmo D-70 16mm camera. It too was used almost exclusively for MOS shooting in tight places where double system sound recording was unnecessary. The Mitchell ran on house current from a wall socket, the Cineflex used a rechargeable battery, and the Eymo was powered by winding it up with a huge key.

Herschell's sound recording equipment consisted of an Ampex recorder with a home-grafted pilot-tone sync head and a two-case magna-sync recorder which Lewis told me had once fallen out of a moving truck but continued to operate well enough to be used. A condenser, two lavaliers, and a Sennheiser shotgun were available for miking dialogue sequences. Lighting equipment




THE
Psychic
HE COULD READ MEN'S MINDS AND CORRUPT THEIR WOMEN!
X
—because of stunning scenes only mature adults can understand
STARRING
DICK GENOLA
ROBIN GUEST
BOBBI SPENCER
CAROL SAENZ
SANDRA WOLSFELD
produced and directed by
JAMES F. HURLEY
a HURLON PRODUCTIONS, Inc. presentation
in astonishing COLOR

consisted of a set of eight Master-Lites, which used "Par" bulbs and employed a special step-up transformer, a couple of Smith-Victor 2000 watt units, and a half dozen 500 to 1000 watt Colortran units with extra ventilation holes punched in their sides courtesy of a beer can opener. These were supplemented by 500 watt mushroom floods for back and hair lighting and photoflood bulbs which could be used in on-set lamps and fixtures.

All this equipment was kept in a sub-basement storage room at 520 North Michigan, a room which also served as the unofficial Lewis museum of properties and artifacts from many of his past productions. I remember seeing the small casket containing the two bottles of Slivovitz used in *A Taste of Blood*, the machete wielded by the dull-witted scalper in *The Gruesome Twosome*, and a set of weirdly wired goggles that had figured in the plot of *An Eye for an Eye*.

Before shooting on *The Psychic* began I was given a crash course by Alex in how to operate all this equipment. This included learning how to load and unload the Mitchell and Cineflex magazines in a changing bag and how to "rackover" the Mitchell in order to match the parallax finder with the reflex finder for perfect framing. For the production itself, I was assigned the position of sound man, but I soon found out that on a Lewis production, crew members did everything they were capable of as the need arose. This applied to Herschell himself, who was never too proud to help out even with the dirtier jobs, like loading and unloading heavy equipment.

On a later production when a magazine jammed and I discovered that the changing bag had been left at a previous location, I suggested using the trunk of a car as an emergency darkroom, intending to take care of the jam myself. But while Herschell accepted my trunk suggestion, he declined my offer to do the work. Instead, he climbed into the dirty auto trunk and unjammed the magazine himself.

Gathered together, all of Lewis' equipment fit into one medium-sized van, which was owned by a member of the crew. Even by today's standards of portability in filmmaking, Herschell traveled light. There was no excess baggage. Just enough to get the job done.

With the equipment assembled and checked out, the film and sound tape stock purchased, and the crew assembled, all pre-production preparations for *The Psychic* were now completed; Hurley himself was handling the casting of his picture as well as the locations. Herschell called the crew for a meeting in his office. He told us that since we would be using people's homes for our locations that we should be extra careful not to cause any damage with our equipment. He also told us not to eat, drink or smoke anything on location. Let the actors be the slobs, he said. Lewis' opinion of actors, it seems, 3 **Dan rapes lesbian Valerie Parker (Carol Saenz) for having made fun of him on national TV. You may recognize Genola from his appearances in the first series of Robert Young Sanka commercials, though not necessarily in this costume.**

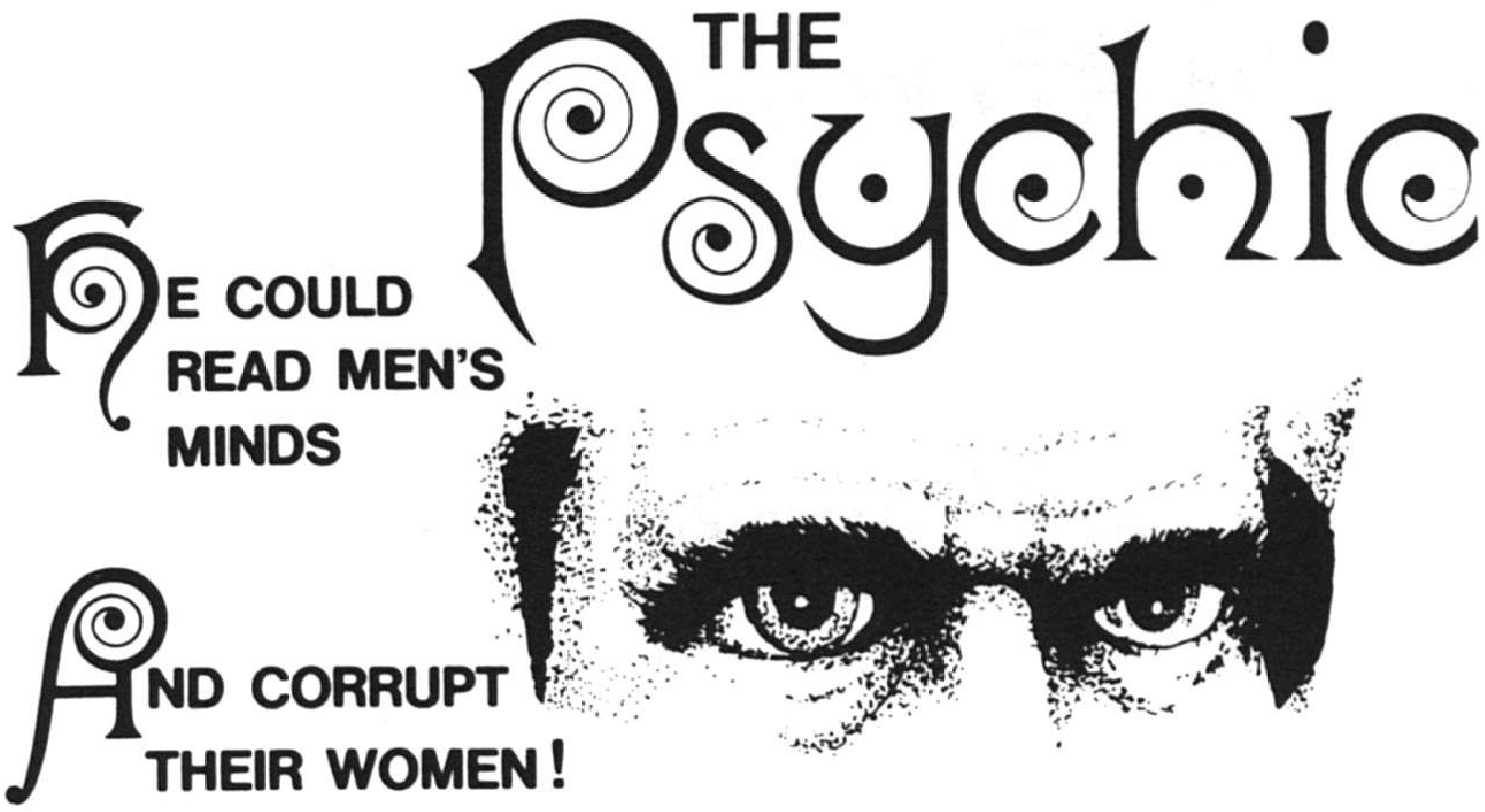
was very similar to the late Alfred Hitchcock's. Or to put it in terms of one of Herschell's own films, they were the "scum of the earth."

He also told us that while it was no sin to make a mistake, it was the ultimate sin not to own up to that mistake or to try to cover it up because it would be much more difficult and costly to correct it months later than at the time. He also cautioned us to report any problems to him personally and privately instead of broadcasting them to the assembled multitudes on location. He didn't want his production unit to look bad at any time in the eyes of the actors, producers, or clients for whom it was working.

By this time we all had copies of Hurley's script in our hands and had become familiar with the story of *The Psychic*. It tells of a young advertising executive named Dan Thomas who, after a fall from a ladder at his home, finds that he has acquired psychic powers that enable him to predict

# CAST

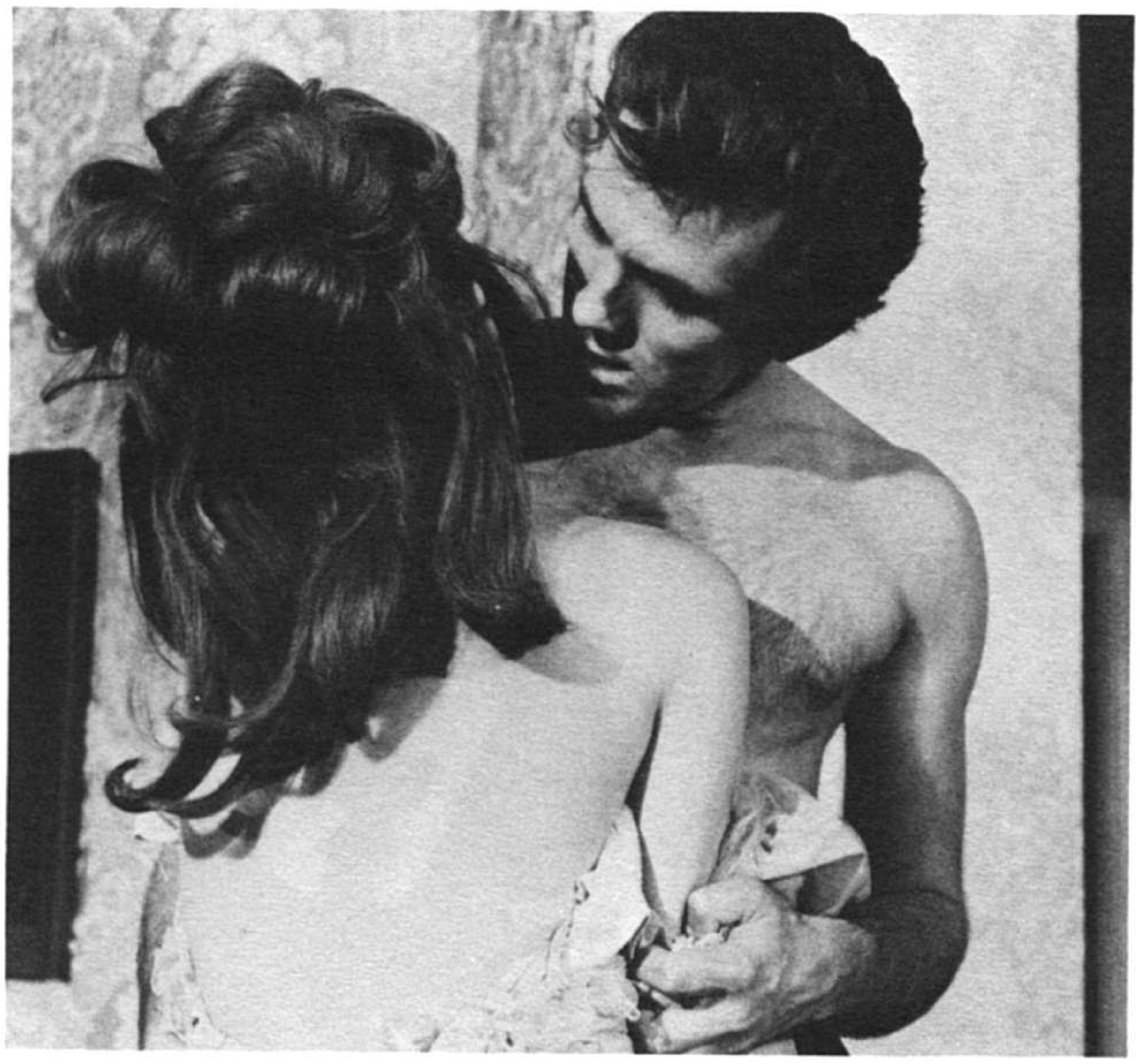
| | |
|---|---|
| DAN THOMAS | Dick Genola |
| ELLEN THOMAS | Robyn Guest |
| HENRY KALDER | Jack Horner |
| LIEUTENANT ANDERS | Fred Michaels |
| VALERIE PARKER | Carol Saenz |
| MR. DOUCETTE | Jim Small |
| BOBBI | Bobbi Spencer |
| PROFESSOR ROXEN | Larry Wellington |
| JERRY LARSON | Dave Whitaker |
| FELICIA KALDER | Sandie Wolsfeld |
| ALICE MORGAN | Arlene Banas |
| GIRL IN LOUNGE | Elaine Blake |
| ARTIE WILSON | Darrold Busse |
| MAN IN PLAYGROUND | George Brown |
| JEFF KALDER | Kevin Miles |
| LISA THOMAS | Rhonda Reed |
| MASTER OF CEREMONIES | Rafael |
| DR. STUART | Frank Josephs |
| JOHN WILSON | Robert Tolman |



RUNNING TIME: 90 MINUTES

# CREDITS

| | |
|---|---|
| PRODUCER AND DIRECTOR | James F. Hurley |
| DIR. CINEMATOGRAPHY | Herschell Gordon Lewis |
| FILM EDITOR | Richard Brinkman |
| ASSISTANT EDITOR | Eskandar Ameripoor |
| ASSISTANTS TO THE PRODUCER | Lee Ahsmann |
| | Scott Carlson |
| | Stan Kutin |
| | Cathleen Parkes |
| | Hal Ripley |
| ASSISTANT DIRECTOR | Louise Downe |
| SOUND RECORDISTS | Daniel Krogh |
| | Robert Lewis |
| ASSISTANT CAMERAMAN | Alex Ameripoor |
| HAIR STYLIST | Jack Mastro |
| SCREENPLAY | James F. Hurley |
| MUSIC COMPOSED, CONDUCTED BY | Vincent Oddo |
| MUSIC PERFORMED BY | The Wynston Symphonia |
| THEME SONG SUNG BY | Bobby Harrison |



3

the future, including the death of his boss. Reveling in his new-found ability to read minds, Dan has an affair with his sister-in-law and eventually leaves his wife Ellen and their daughter, Lisa, to go off in search of the big time.

Dan then meets Bobbi, a sexy young woman with an interest in show biz, and they begin performing a psychic nightclub act together. They also become bed partners. But when they are "discovered" by Mr. Doucette, a patron of the arts who also believes in ESP, and Dan alone is invited to New York, Dan quickly dumps Bobbi to advance himself. In New York, Doucette is superceded as Dan's manager by Henry Kalder, who offers Dan a contract as well as a chance to appear on the nationally televised Jerry Larsen TV show.

Appearing on the show with movie star Valerie Parker, who ridicules him on camera when Dan, whose powers are beginning to wane, fails a pre-arranged test of his abilities, Dan gets even by revealing that Valerie is a lesbian. Kalder drops him like a hot potato. When Valerie refuses to listen to Dan's apology for his behavior, she again makes fun of him, and so he rapes her.

Meanwhile Lisa runs away, hoping that her father will use his powers to find her. He does but it was just a publicity stunt designed to help him regain his lost fame. A child molester then assaults the missing Lisa, Ellen learns of Dan's deceit involving Lisa's disappearance and leaves him for good. And Dan is left alone to contemplate a sad future. Can he rebuild the shards of his past life, or should he continue to con people, hoping that his powers will return? Only time will supply the answer.

With a mediocre plot at best, *The Psychic* was to become under Hurley's direction arguably one of the most boring films in the history of exploitation filmmaking. The picture was virtually actionless, consisting mainly of people talking. Even the incidents in the script that called for action all took place off screen. Herschell, in his role as director of cinematography, acquiesced to Hurley's wishes at all times. After all, Hurley was paying the bills. Still, he did try on several occasions to tactfully warn Hurley that what he was producing might be rather unsaleable because of its lack of action. Herschell's warnings fell on deaf ears, but in the end his judgment was vindicated.

Arriving at Hurley's suburban Chicago home at seven a.m. for the first day of shooting, we were met by Hurley in his pajamas and bathrobe. He told us that he had just gotten up and that he still had to have breakfast. This set the tone for the entire production, which was beset by scheduling mishaps, blown location arrangements, and habitual tardiness, all engineered by Hurley. To compensate for these deficiencies, we played a hurry up and wait game, working a lot of twelve- to sixteen-hour days during the two-week shooting schedule to make up for lost time. On the last day of shooting, we worked twenty-six hours straight just to get done on schedule.

Herschell bore up nicely under the onslaught of Hurley's amateurism with the patience of Job, and with a lot of good humor. He managed to keep up the morale of the crew by making jokes at Hurley's expense, and yet without ever undermining Hurley's authority as director. After all, he said, we were the man's employees, and we owed it to him to let him make his own mistakes if that was what he was intent upon.

While shooting—as opposed to waiting for Hurley to get his act together, Herschell and his crew were the essence of professionalism. Every take of every scene was carefully slated and logged, as were the sound takes, whether they were sync or wild. The action and dialogue covered by each take were recorded in a copy of the shooting script and Polaroid pictures were taken of each set-up in order to maintain continuity. As the sound recordist, my job was to record not only the sync dialogue tracks, but room ambience as well in order to cover cutaways and MOS shots: Herschell wanted no dropouts in the finished sound track.

As a finished film, *The Psychic* thus demonstrated a high level of technical competence even though it lacked dramatic intensity and action. And true to Herschell's predictions, months after the film had been completed, James Hurley had still failed to sell it. The film was a turkey. Herschell was not surprised when Hurley returned to him later, asking for help in saving his pet project from cinematic oblivion. Lewis suggested that the easiest way out was to shoot some soft-core nude sex scenes and insert them into the picture to enliven the action. Hurley originally agreed to including one such scene, but as the months wore on and still no sale was in sight, he agreed to have Herschell graft six more such scenes onto the picture. These scenes were all MOS with music and were shot quickly on almost non-existent budgets. They therefore tend to stick out in the film like sore thumbs, creating the effect of patchwork. But they did help sell the picture for Hurley. The final picture was retitled *Copenhagen's Psychic Loves* to help make it sound like one of those Scandinavian sex clinic pictures then in vogue, and it proved to be a modest success. In fact, it's probably still playing grind houses to this very day.

# CHAPTER ELEVEN

# *Butchery live on stage: the saga of the Blood Shed Theatre*

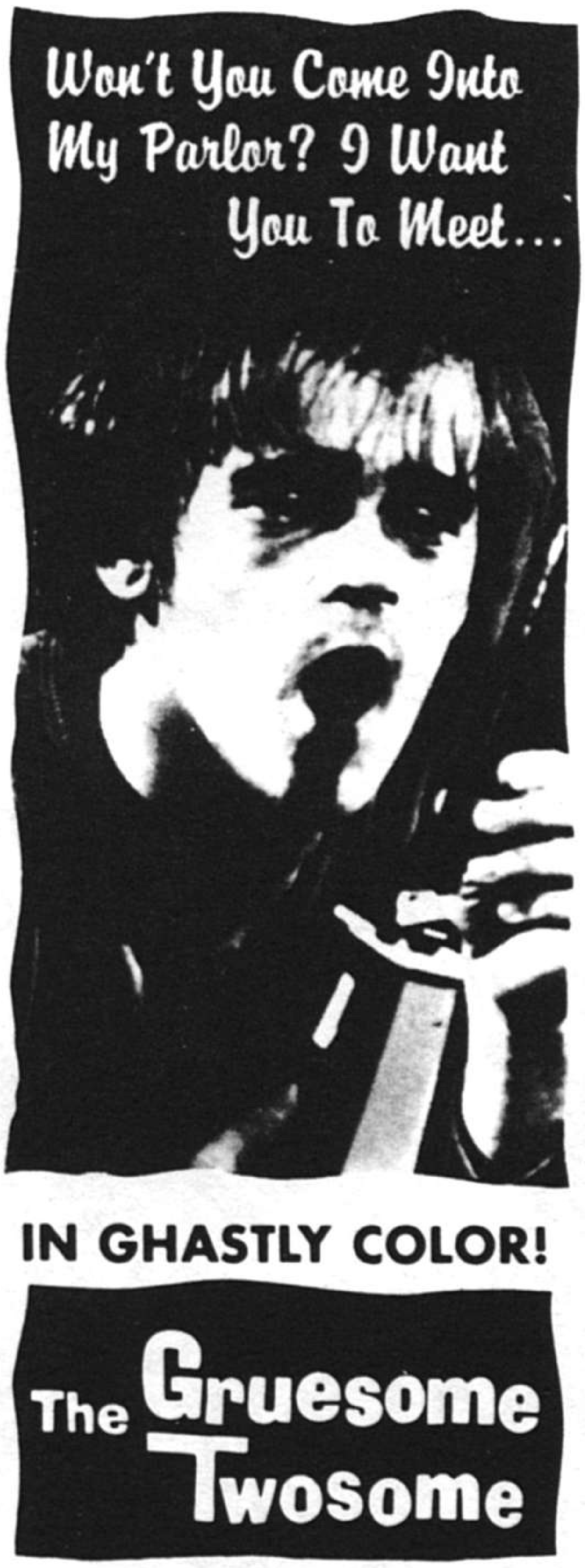
**After completion of *The Psychic,* I asked Herschell if he had any steady work that I might do until the next feature came along. He thought for a moment, then told me to report to Louise Downe about working in "the theatre." I did, and she hired me. And that's how I became the non-union projectionist, as well as sometime ticket taker and trouble-shooter, at Herschell Gordon Lewis' home-grown *Théâtre du Grand Guignol*—the Blood Shed.**

The Blood Shed theatre occupied a small storefront building that had formerly been a restaurant on Wells Street near the south end of Chicago's Old Town. A front window held a display of two dismembered department store mannequins, one a full figure, the other a bust, from whose eyes electrically pumped stage blood constantly flowed. Inside near the street door were the ticket booth, the stage, and the screen; a narrow hallway, which ran alongside the audience area, led to the projection booth, formerly a kitchen, and a small upstairs snack bar.

In this humble setting, the tourists and the citizens of Old Town were offered showings not only of Herschell's films, but those of other directors in the gore-exploitation genre. A live stage show highlighted by simulated throat slashings, as well as a recreation of *Blood Feast's* notorious tongue removal scene, added to the taboo fun. The skits in the show were authored by Allison Louise Downe, who also managed the theatre, and were filled with weird characters with names like Count Satan, Wanda Werewolf, and Irving Vampire. A couple of out of work go-go girls worked as shills in the audience, portraying victims.

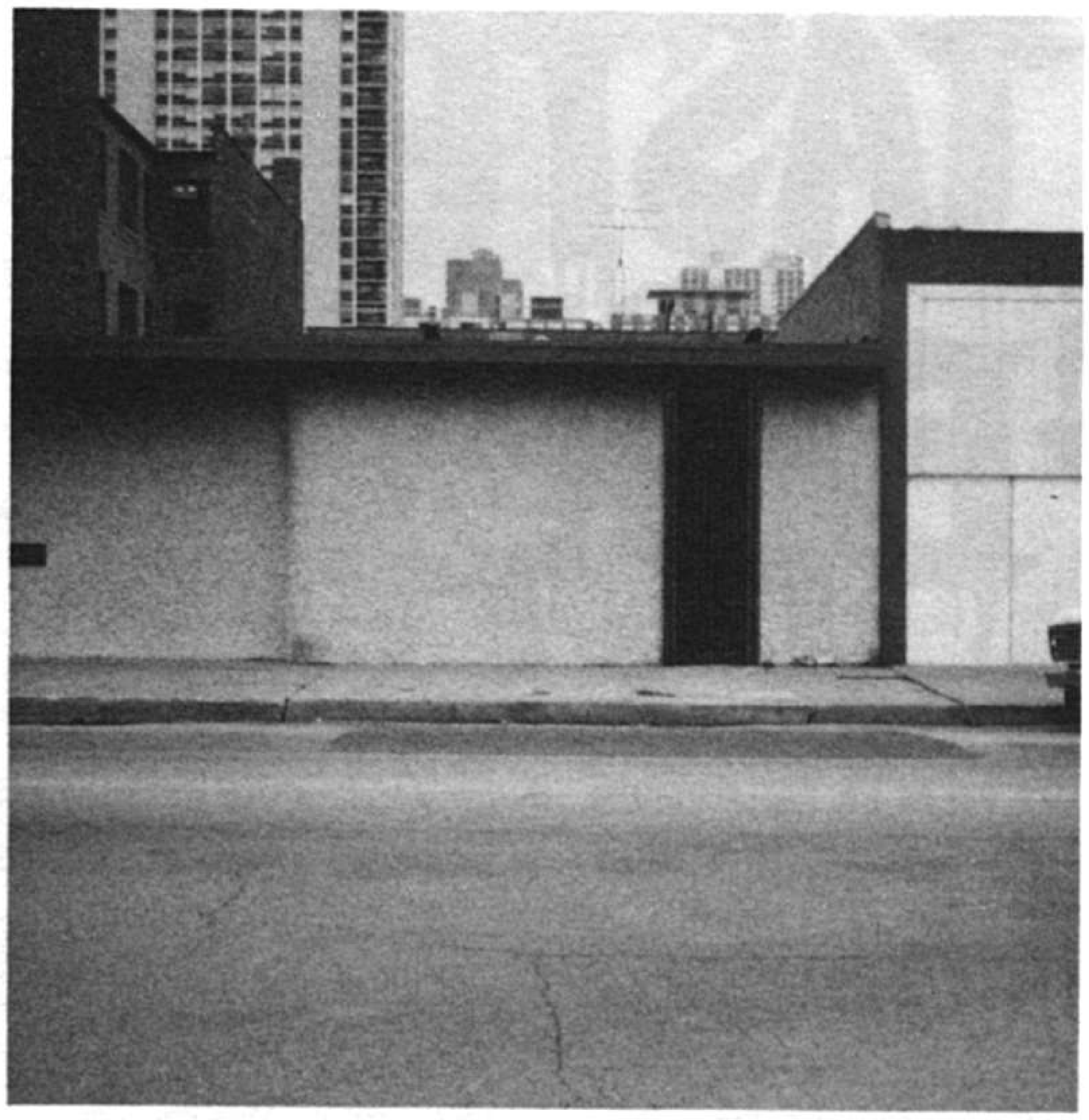
The skits opened in a light vein complete with characters spouting outrageous limericks and puns, but before long their talk would turn to such topics as the need for fresh blood, or a ripe, juicy human tongue to be used for some diabolical purpose. Sometimes the characters on stage would lure the planted victims into coming on stage, at which time Count Satan would attempt to hypnotise them and coax them into becoming the victims of bizarre, violent acts. At other times, they would be dragged on stage by the characters and trussed up. From then on the result was inevitable: blood would flow, whether from a slit throat or a pulled out tongue.

The large butcher knives used in the acts had their edges dulled so that no one would get hurt. They were tricked up with rubber bulbs filled with stage blood that had been gaffed onto one side of the handle—which was always carefully concealed from the audience so as not to spoil the illusion. A rubber tube ran from the bulb to the point of the knife. By squeezing the bulb while holding the knife, the blood would spurt, as if erupting from the imaginary wound of the victim on stage.



1 **The former site of the Blood Shed Theatre as it appears today looking from the opposite side of Chicago's Wells Street. The original address was 1331 N. Wells. It has since been annexed to the structure at its left, the offices of a construction firm.**

2 **The Blood Shed, Lewis' Chicago-based theatre of *grand guignol*, treated audiences to on-stage gore. But Lewis classics like *The Gruesome Twosome* (1967), *A Taste of Blood* (1967) and *She-Devils on Wheels* (1968) were also screened for patrons.**



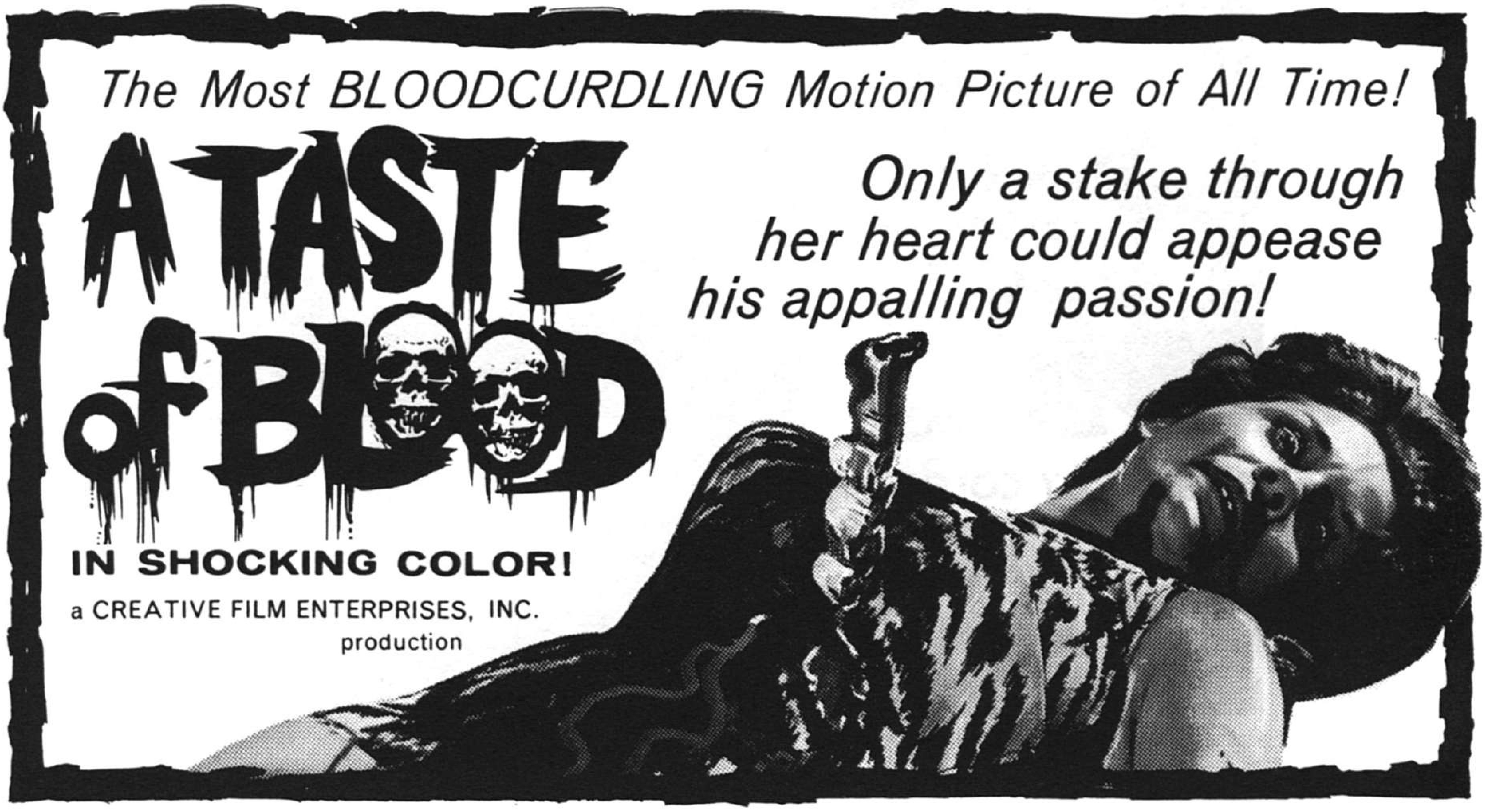
1

2

YEAR-ROUND CYCLING
Village cycle
OFF SEASON
BIKE STORAGE

The severed tongues were really sheep tongues that were stored in an old freezer in the kitchen now turned projection booth. The actor doing the pulling would turn his victim away from the audience then palm the tongue from somewhere on his person and place it into the victim's mouth. Then, after much pulling and tugging—accompanied, of course, by the victim's shrieks, he would yank the bloody trophy from the victim's mouth and display it triumphantly to the horrified audience.

The stage of the Blood Shed was usually dimly lit with black light in order to enhance the illusion. Because many of our patrons were a bit gullible, I remember having to reassure a fair number of them afterwards that what they had witnessed on stage had merely been an act. Frequently, I would even get into the act myself by running from the projection booth and yelling "Oh, my god! What have you done? It's only supposed to be an


The Most BLOODCURDLING Motion Picture of All Time!
A TASTE of BLOOD
Only a stake through her heart could appease his appalling passion!
IN SHOCKING COLOR!
a CREATIVE FILM ENTERPRISES, INC. production

act, but now you've killed someone!" Or: "What are you doing to that poor woman?" And upon hearing the ghoulish answer, I would fiendishly reply, "Well then, let me help you." The stage shows at the Blood Shed were like playing gruesome Halloween pranks seven nights a week.

Despite its horrific live action presentations and the popular showings of such Lewis "classics" as *The Gruesome Twosome*, *A Taste of Blood* and *She-Devils on Wheels*, the Blood Shed Theatre was never much of a money maker for Herschell. Perhaps it was in a bad location. Or maybe its revenues were eaten up by having to support too many employees. For whatever reason, it soon folded. Near the end of its existence, the name of the theatre was changed to Le Cinema Bizarre, and we showed nudies, including Herschell's own *Lucky Pierre* and David Friedman's *The Lustful Turk*, rather than gore pictures.

Perhaps the Blood Shed finally suc-

3

3 ***The Gruesome Twosome***
4 ***She-Devils on Wheels***
5 ***The Gruesome Twosome***

4

5

cumbed for no other reason than a loss of blood. Who knows! Anyway . . . it was a bloody good time while it lasted.

# CHAPTER TWELVE

# Herschell shoots a nudie western

**In the winter of 1968, Tom Dowd, who had previously commissioned Herschell to produce *Alley Tramp*, approached him about making a nudie western designed to capitalize on David Friedman's *Ramrod*, a nudie western then in successful release. Herschell agreed and in a couple of weeks, Louise Downe had whipped up a shooting script for a semi-clothesless horse opera to be called *Abilene '69*.**

Dowd read the script and became sold on the idea, so Herschell, Alex and I left Chicago in mid-winter and headed for Hollywood, the land of sunshine, warm breezes and large numbers of nubile young women who would be willing to shed their clothes for our picture.

While Herschell flew on ahead to make the initial arrangements, Alex and I crammed ourselves and all our gear into a rent-a-car, then took off on Route 66. We didn't include all of Herschell's production gear by any means as we were to lease an Arri with a 25-250 mm zoom lens in Los Angeles. The studio that Herschell was renting to shoot interiors for the picture also had its own complement of lighting gear for our use.

Our vehicle wasn't exactly roomy and so Alex and I fought each other for the driver's seat; sitting on the passenger's side involved having to straddle a case and a couple of light stands.

Four days and nights later, we reached Los Angeles and checked in with Herschell at the Ramada Inn on Hollywood Boulevard. There we also met Tom Dowd, a gentle, soft spoken man in his mid-to-late fifties, as well as the rest of the crew Lewis had hired, led by a cowboy by the name of Buck Buckalew.

At six the next morning, we drove up into the Hollywood hills in Buckalew's van with an entourage of cars to the locations Herschell had chosen to shoot the exteriors. During the drive, I got to know the cast of the picture. Designed by Louise Downe to be a low budget picture, *Linda and Abilene*, as it was now called, had only four major characters, two male and two female. All of the minor characters were to be played by members of the crew. I'm even in the film playing a bystander during the picture's climactic gunfight.

Herschell had done some very good typecasting for the film's major roles. Kip Marsh (not his real name), who was to play the hero, Tod, was as naive and ingenuous as his character. He took me aside at lunch the first day and nervously quizzed me about the film's upcoming nude sex scenes and exactly what would be expected of him. I explained that since this was a soft core picture, he would only be expected to perform simulated sex, that he would only have to take his clothes off and pretend. This served to allay his fears.

Portraying the heroine, Abilene, was Sharon Matt, a beautiful young woman

*Hard-riding cowboys could tame their buckin' broncos... but they couldn't break*

# LINDA and ABILENE

**No woman could escape having her body used in the raw and Wild West of 1869!**

*HOTTER THAN BLAZING PISTOLS!*

STARRING
SHARON MATT
KIP MARSH

filmed in
*SEARING COLOR*

*THEIR UNNATURAL PASSION TORE THE LID OFF THE OLD WEST - AND SOMETIMES THEY DIDN'T EVEN NEED MEN!*

PRODUCED IN HOLLYWOOD U.S.A. BY UNITED PICTURES ORGANIZATION
BRANDED "X" (DUE TO EXPLICIT SCENES)

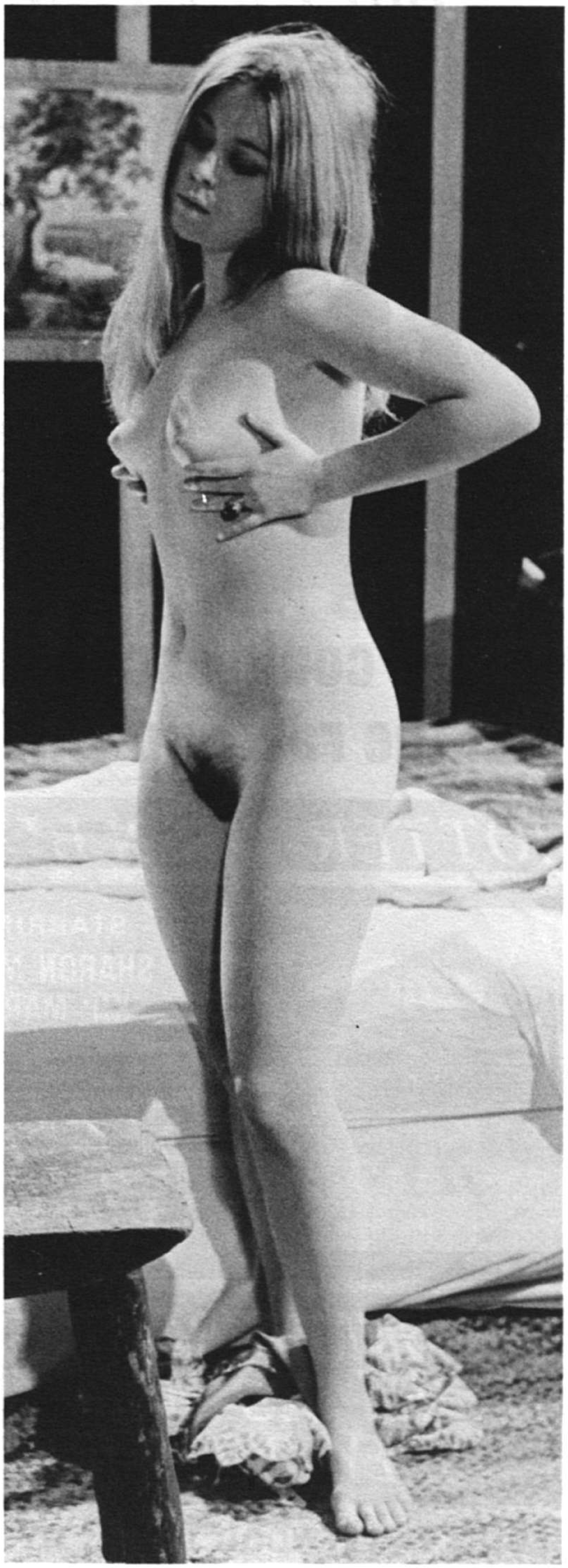
1 **Abilene (Sharon Matt) tries to relieve some of her sexual frustration through self-manipulation in this bedroom scene shot at Crescent Studios in Hollywood for Lewis' nudie western, *Linda and Abilene* (1969).**

2 **The climactic fight between Tod and Rawhide (Tom Thorn) on the western street at Spahn's Ranch. Note the author posing as an extra next to the post under the saloon sign.**

with long blond hair, who literally radiated innocence and vulnerability, the chief characteristics of her role. Contrary to what one might have expected, Sharon was no dummy, for I remember her discoursing at length during the shoot on her love for the music of Sibelius. Her husband, Dennis Matt, would later design and build the magician's props for Herschell's upcoming gore film extraordinaire, *The Wizard of Gore* (1970).

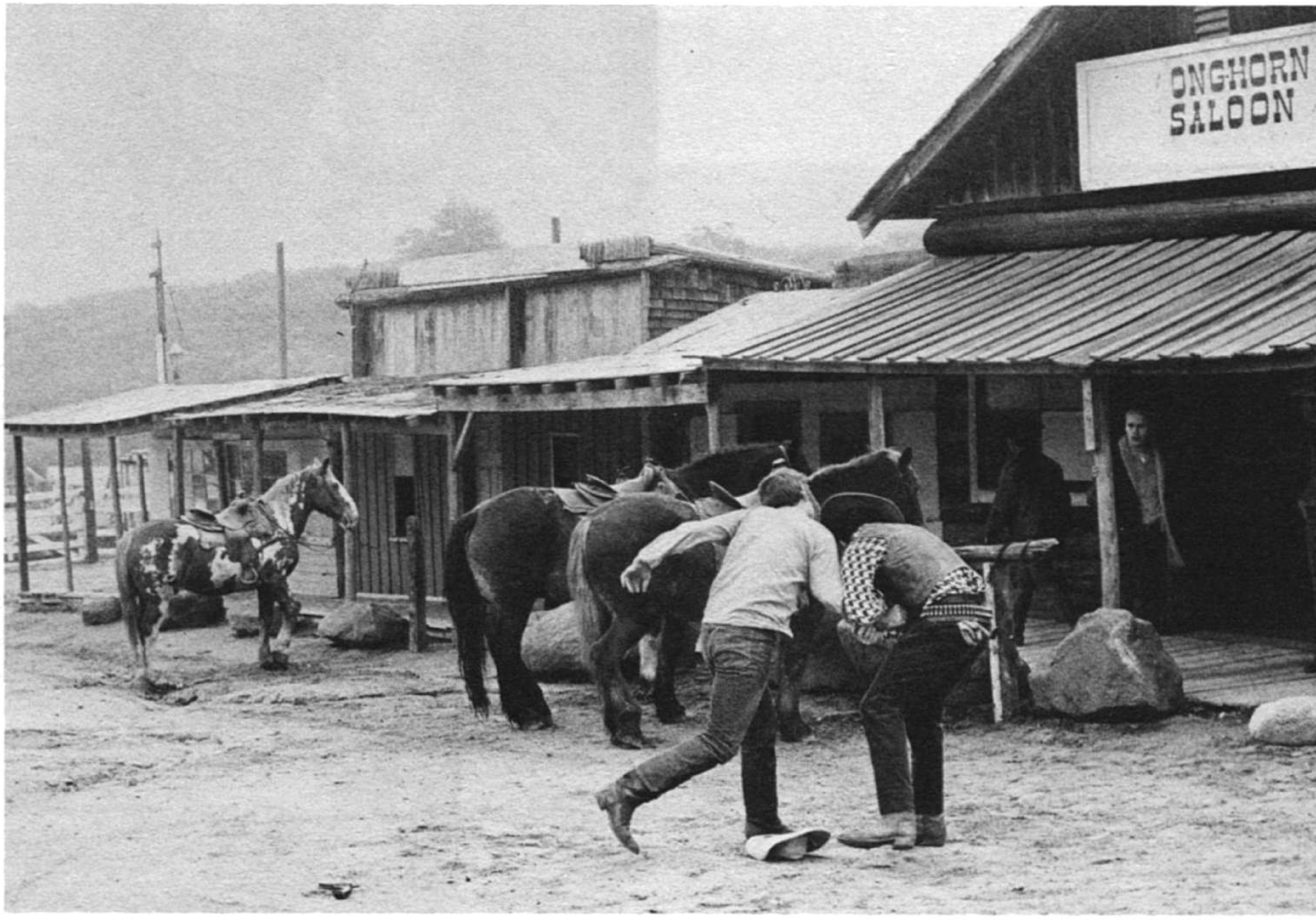
As Linda, the film's fallen woman, Roxanne Jones (also not her real name) was a few years older than Sharon and had dark hair and tougher features which helped her to exude a worldly-wise sensuality. In fact, she was planning to make acting in nudie sex films her life's work. She had even had her breasts silicone enlarged for the job and kept referring to them as her "ticket sellers."

Playing Rawhide, the villain of the piece, Tom Thorn (again not his real name) had a black beard and moustache as well



1

3 **Linda and Abilene get it on. Note Roxanne's siliconed "ticket sellers."**



2

3

as a pockmarked face; he looked the incarnation of evil. He talked of having just finished doing extra work on *Paint Your Wagon*, the expensive Paramount musical that had recently finished shooting with the unlikely cast of Lee Marvin, Clint Eastwood and Jean Seberg. Tom had also arranged for our primary shooting location: a place called Spahn's Movie Ranch.

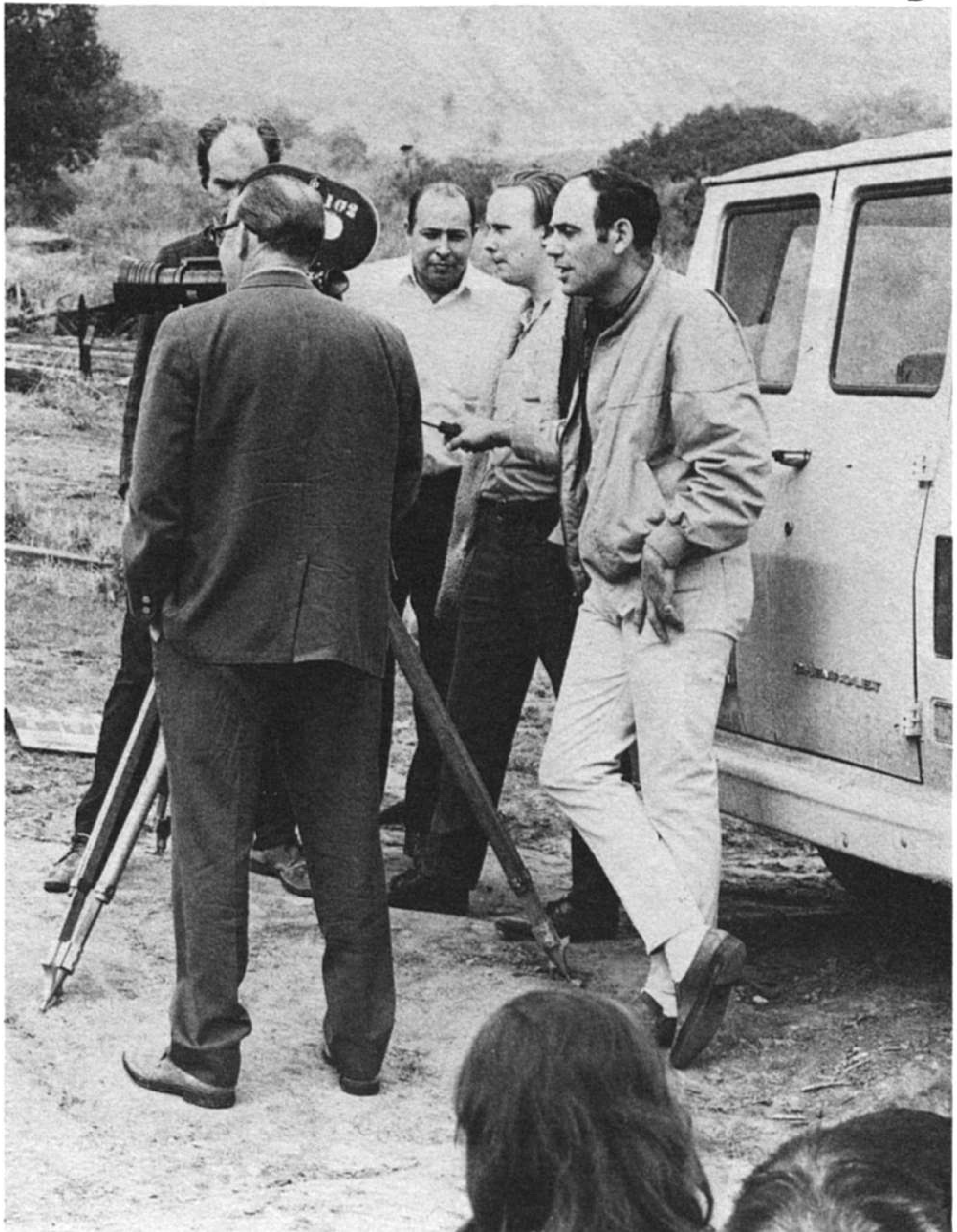
Not famous at the time, Spahn's Ranch was a ramshackle collection of old western buildings, corrals, and shacks that had been used from the twenties through the forties as backgrounds for many B westerns. It was owned by George Spahn, a blind man in his sixties, whom we saw hobbling about the ranch a few times looking as though he were lost. There were also a couple of down on their luck wranglers and several young women, whom we took to be horse fanciers, in residence at Spahn's Ranch during our shoot.

4 **Abilene gives herself over to the more than brotherly carresses of her sibling, Tod (Kip Marsh).**

5 **Behind the scenes. Left to right: Larry Marcus, Tom Dowd (back to camera), Alex Ameripoor, the author, and HGL himself on location at the notorious Spahn's Movie Ranch. I can't help but wonder now. Might that have been a member of the infamous Manson family watching us in the foregound?**

4

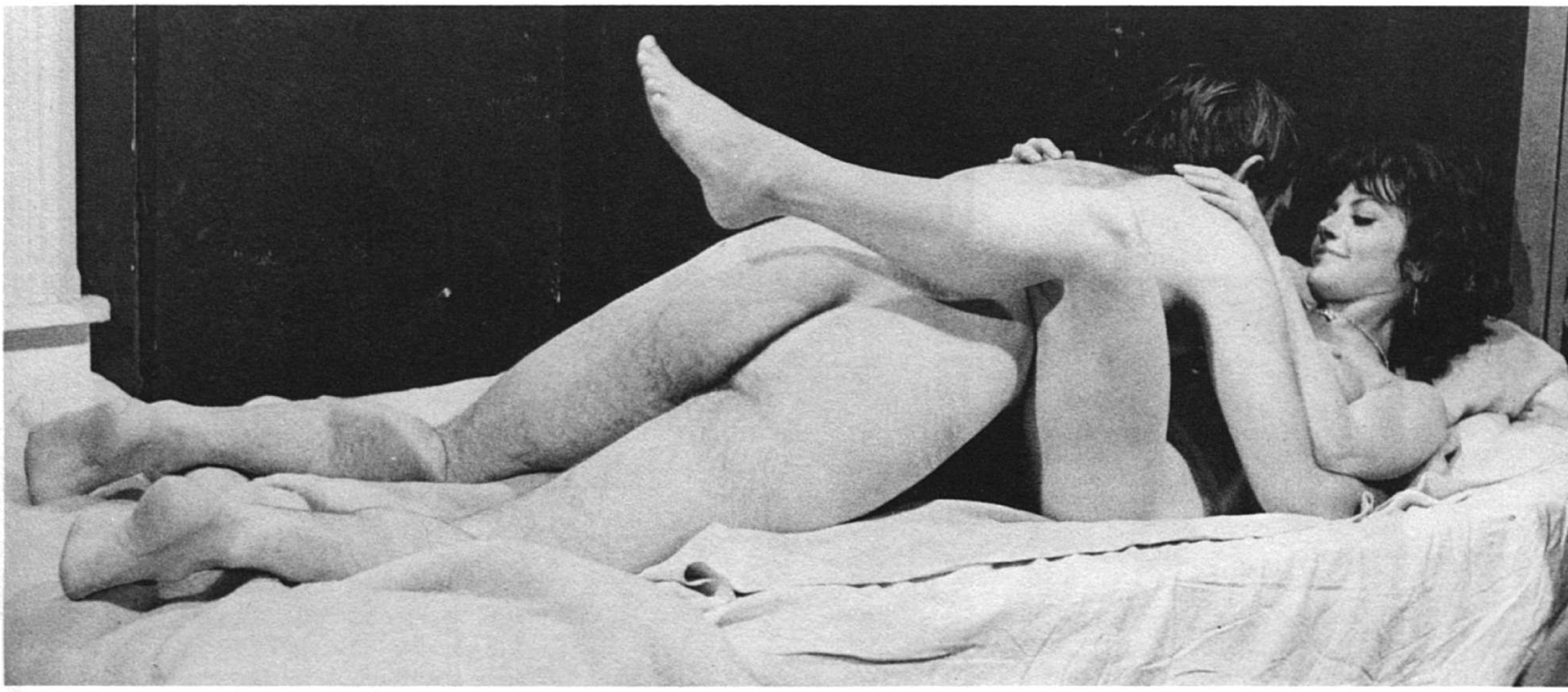
5



Fate is often ironic: perhaps this is why Herschell Gordon Lewis, the Wizard of Gore, was brought to Spahn's Movie Ranch. It was a case of Herschell and company, purveyors of cinematic sex and violence, coming uncomfortably close to the real thing. Only a few months later, Spahn's Ranch would become notorious as the lair of the Charles Manson "family," following the Sharon Tate murders of August 9, 1969. At the time, however, we were shooting a picture and were therefore blissfully unaware of the potential evil and danger that perhaps lurked all around us.

The plot of *Linda and Abilene*—in direct contrast to the seediness of our surroundings and the people who lived there—was one of pure innocence. When their parents suddenly die, Abilene and her brother Tod are left alone together on their farm in the wild west of 1869. Their isolation from the world outside, coupled with their close physical proximity, leads to mutual

6



6 **Linda (Roxanne Jones) seduces Tod. Kip Marsh was greatly relieved when I told him that the lovemaking only had to be faked.**

sexual longings and frustration. Abilene begins displaying her body to Tod, and both siblings subsequently take to masturbating for relief.

Their lust for one another finally overflows one night during a thunder storm when a frightened Abilene calls out to Tod for comfort. Tod comes running into her bedroom to find Abilene totally nude, and his brotherly solicitations soon develop into passionate lovemaking. With the floodgates now open, Abilene and Tod engage in sex at every opportunity and begin to neglect their chores. Yes, indeed, the wages of sin often result in a rundown farm.

Eventually realizing the incestuous nature of their relationship, Tod rides to town to drown his guilt in alcohol. There he meets and confides in Linda, a saloon girl, who comforts him by taking him to her bed. Meanwhile back at the ranch (I mean farm), the evil Rawhide (his villainous character established by his under the credits rape of Linda at the beginning of the film) shows up at the farm and ravishes the helpless Abilene.

When Tod returns home to find Abilene bruised, defiled and in tears, he immediately rides back to town to find and kill Rawhide. After Tod's departure, Linda arrives at the farm looking for him. An initial jealous confrontation between the two women turns to torrid lesbian love, however, when Linda seduces Abilene.

Riding into town, Tod finds Rawhide in the saloon and calls him out into the street. Both men pull their guns and fire at the same time, killing each other. Later there is a double funeral for the two men and Linda and Abilene are left alone at fade-out to comfort one another.

We began by shooting the funeral scenes that begin and end the picture, with the Hollywood crew playing mourners and Buckalew playing the preacher. These scenes were shot MOS with the rented Arri—music and/or sound effects were to be added later. When it began to rain, we moved inside the saloon and shot sync sound set-ups with the Mitchell.

Wisely, Herschell waited until the ranch people had finished their kibbitzing and had forgotten about us before attempting to shoot any of the nude scenes, beginning with the one in which Sharon Matt skinny dips in the creek, displaying her body to Tod. First, Herschell let the young actress disrobe and become accustomed to the water as well as the presence of the crew. Then he shot long shots with the Arri on a tripod. Moving in closer, he took the Arri off its tripod and shot hand held. He kept up a constant, good-natured patter with his star, coaxing a performance from her with a combination of specific directions and jokes that helped to keep things from seeming too serious. After finishing with the Arri, he whipped off a 100-foot roll with the Eymo, shooting hand held and not even looking through the viewfinder, just playing the

7 **Abilene (Sharon Matt) goes skinny-dipping.**
8 **Abilene checks herself out in the mirror.**

7

*Hard-ridin' cowboys*
*could tame their*
*buckin' broncos . . .*
*but they couldn't break*

**LINDA**
**and**
**ABILENE**

**Sometimes they**
**didn't even**
**need men!**

**HOTTER THAN BLAZING PISTOLS**
STARRING:
**SHARON MATT ● KIP MARSH**
*in SEARING COLOR*
**Produced in Hollywood U. S. A.**

8

camera over her body as if caressing it.

Later, he used humor to break the tension for Kip Marsh and Sharon prior to their first mock lovemaking scene. Taking Kip aside during a rehearsal, Herschell gave him a horse-apple to present to Sharon as a stand-in for the love offering called for in the script. Kip handed it to Sharon during the next run-through and everyone broke up. The tension disappeared and the scene got shot.

We filmed exterior locations at the Spahn ranch for a total of two very long working days—from sun up 'til sunset. By the end, Alex and I had contracted "Mitchell Shoulder" from carrying the 100-pound Mitchell and its tripod around, and had torn our thumbs as well on the gears of the Arri from loading it.

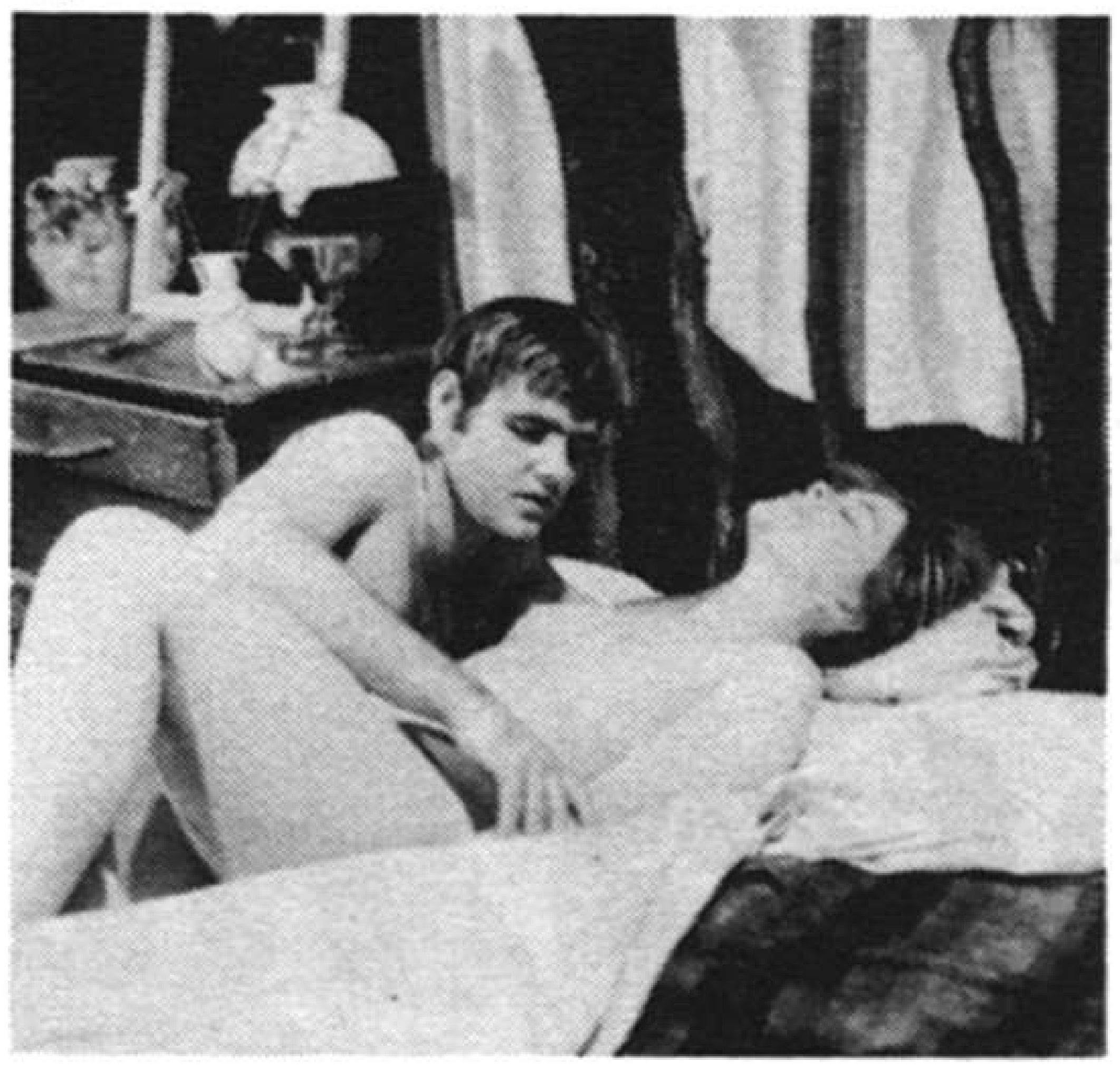
With the completion of the exteriors, we headed back to Hollywood where we shot the remainder of our interiors at Crescent Studios on Santa Monica Boulevard.

The sound stage at Crescent was of a modest size. Its floor measured about 25 feet by 35 feet, thus accommodating only one interior setting at a time. It did, however, have a 15-foot ceiling and catwalks which made it perfect for lighting. The studio suited our purposes because we only had three interior settings to shoot: the kitchen/living room and bedroom of Tod and Abilene's farmhouse and the back room of the saloon where Linda seduces Tod. We had already shot the bar room interiors in the saloon at Spahn's Ranch.

For the in-studio shots, we muffled Herschell's Mitchell in its blimp, adding

9 **From a contact sheet of prints from *Linda and Abilene.* The author appears in each of the photos in the first vertical row, positioning the microphone and so on. The other four shots are of Abilene and Tod (Kip Marsh) engaging in sibling sex.**

9



another 80 pounds to the camera's weight, and mounted it on a rented Movieola crab dolly so that at least we could roll it around rather than lug it. I settled into my role as sound engineer, recording the sync takes, which were miked with a shotgun that hung off a fishpole from one of the catwalks. I also assisted in making dolly shots by either steering or pulling focus.

At one point, I remember an overly fastidious member of the California crew pointing out a very minor detail in continuity. A vase was out of place on the kitchen table. Herschell replied with aplomb: "My dear sir, if the audience notices that, we haven't got a picture."

During the shooting of the interiors, including most of the sex scenes, there had been almost no one on the set who didn't have a useful or practical reason for being there. But for some strange reason, this situation changed dramatically when it came time to lens the lesbian love scene. All of a sudden male voyeurs started to appear out of the woodwork. Tom Dowd arrived with a crony, Lewis' former partner David Friedman appeared, and all the guys from the sound studio next door materialized. They all waited with great anticipation, then watched in hushed silence as the two naked women crawled all over each other in the bed in the heat of simulated lovemaking. When the scene was shot, they all disappeared as quickly as they had arrived. I don't even know if Herschell —with *all* his degrees—could adequately supply an explanation of that phenomenon.

The interior shooting lasted three days, which, added to the two days on location, made *Linda and Abilene* an under-one-week wonder. As we were about to wrap the picture and shoot the last lovemaking scene between Sharon Matt and Kip Marsh, Herschell turned on the Mitchell, which ran silently within its blimp, then spoke directions aloud to the actors because the scene was MOS. When he had shot enough, instead of saying "Cut!", he motioned to the rest of us to leave silently, and we all slipped out of the room, leaving Sharon and Kip to continue their mock erotic entanglements for another five minutes totally unaware that they were alone. It was very funny.

With the picture in the can, Herschell flew home, while Alex Ameripoor and I secured another rent-a-car to transport ourselves, the equipment and the entire uncut negative and sound track of the film back to Chicago. The car we got was in perfect condition except for one thing: its windshield wipers were broken. Naturally, we ran into a blizzard while crossing the Rockies. I remember driving through the storm with my head thrust out the side to see where we were going—to make sure that *Linda and Abilene* (not to mention us) stood some chance of getting safely home.

★ *THE ECSTASIES OF WOMEN* ★
★ *MISS NYMPHET'S ZAP-IN* ★ *BLACK LOVE* ★

# CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# The later nudies

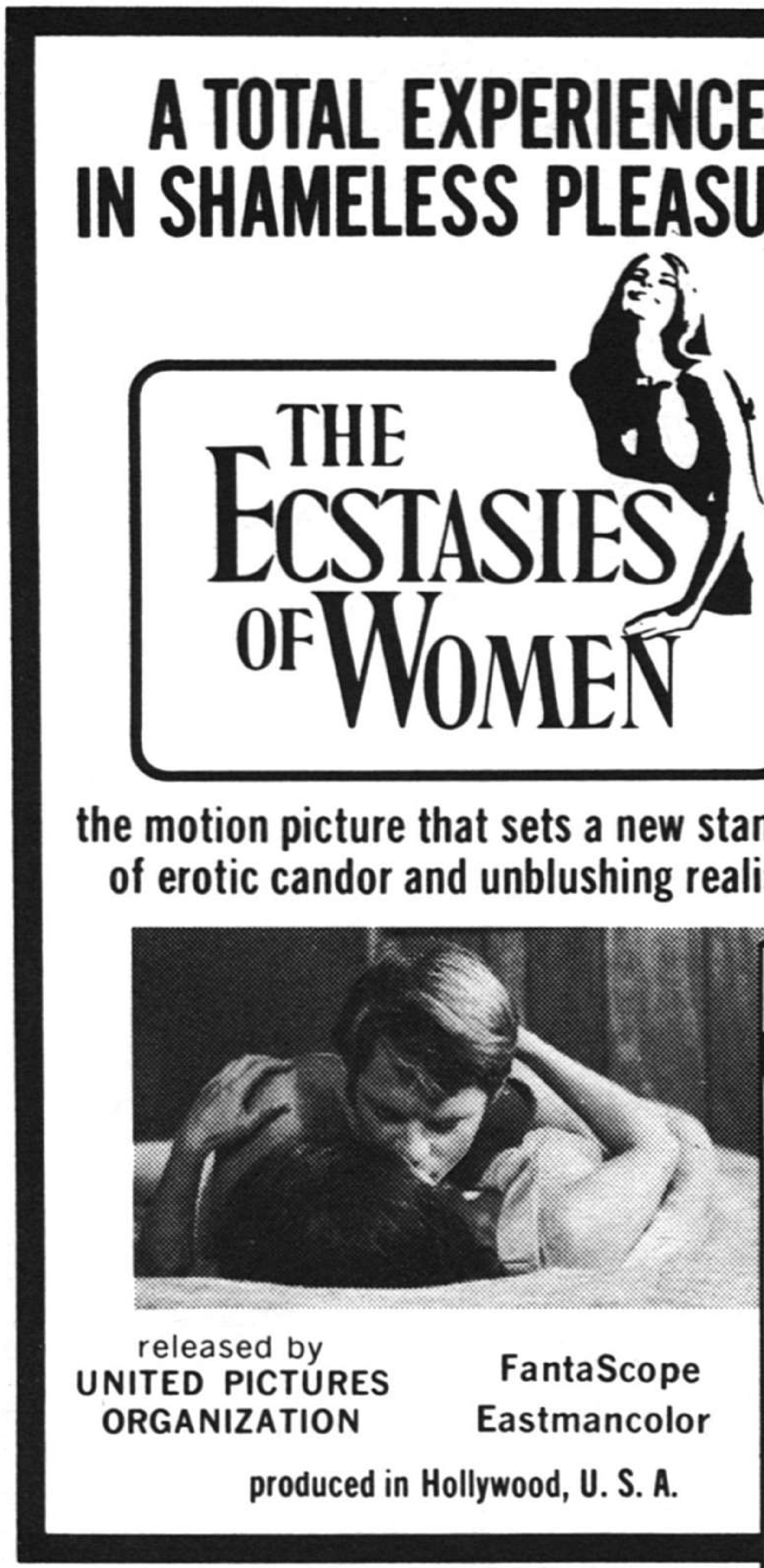
**Herschell Gordon Lewis produced and directed three other nudie pictures during the period I worked for him which I did not have any connection with. Two of them were produced in Hollywood—*The Ecstasies of Women* and *Miss Nymphet's Zap-In;* the third, *Black Love,* was shot in Chicago.**

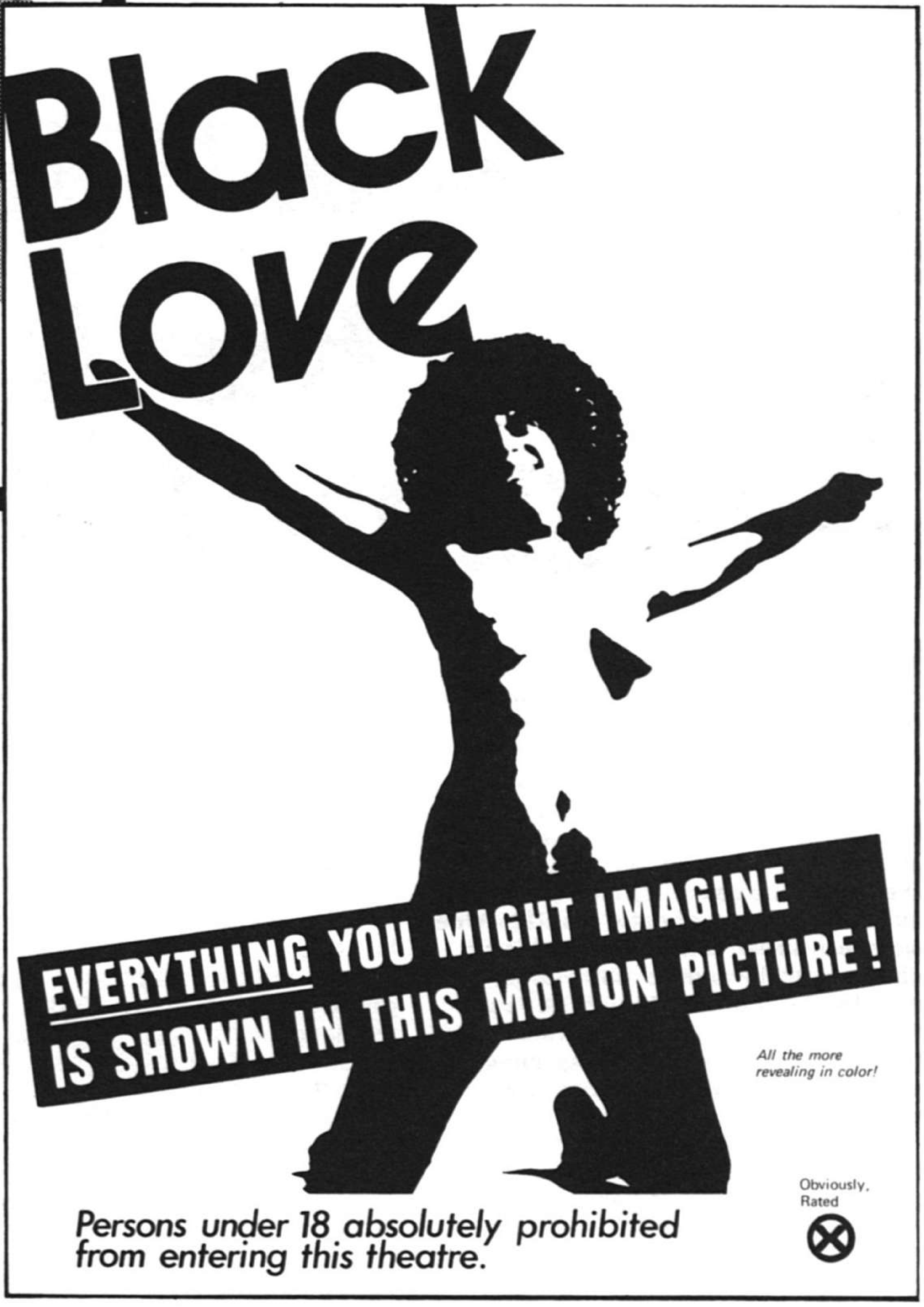
*The Ecstasies of Women* was actually made before *Linda and Abilene*, using essentially the same crew (minus yours truly) and some of the same cast, including Sharon Matt. The film has very few exteriors as it was lensed almost entirely within the confines of Crescent Studios. It too was produced for Tom Dowd and his United Pictures Organization.

More loosely plotted than *Linda and Abilene* (to the extent that there's no screenplay credit listed in the film's pressbook), *Ecstasies* takes place at a bachelor stag party thrown for the hero, Gene, by his buddies on the eve of his wedding. Starting at a topless go-go nightclub, the all-night party eventually moves to Gene's yacht, where the festivities soon blossom into an orgy. During the wild goings-on, Gene re-lives his past experiences with "the ecstacies of women" via flashbacks. By dawn's early light, he abandons his marriage plans and sets out to re-live his past for real in the arms of Summer Frenzy, his topless paramour of the moment.

*Miss Nymphet's Zap-In,* a "nudie" burlesque on Rowan and Martin's hit TV show *Laugh-In,* was produced by Lewis' own Creative Film Enterprises and was distributed by Fred Sandy's Mayflower Pictures. This film consists of a series of comic sketches which involve a man and a woman making love on a *Candid Camera*-type TV show; a virginal Little Lord Fauntleroy-type character exploring the female anatomy for the first time; native women capturing a Great White Hunter and boiling him in a pot; and a chorus line of topless go-go girls trying out a wild new kind of dance. In certain ways, *Zap-In* is little more than an updated reworking of Herschell's much earlier nudie, *BOIN-N-G!*

*Black Love* was a nudie sex picture with an all-black cast that was filmed entirely in Chicago shortly before production began on *The Gore-Gore Girls*. Lensed in three days (or less), it was definitely a minor effort, produced solely for monetary gain. There is no plot summary of the film extant, which is probably just as well. Even Herschell admitted to me that he was not very proud of that picture. But he also reported that it was a minor bonanza for him at the box office. And in the end, that's what counted.


A TOTAL EXPERIENCE
IN SHAMELESS PLEASURE
THE
ECSTASIES
OF WOMEN
the motion picture that sets a new standard
of erotic candor and unblushing realism
released by
UNITED PICTURES
ORGANIZATION
FantaScope
Eastmancolor
produced in Hollywood, U. S. A.


Black
Love
EVERYTHING YOU MIGHT IMAGINE
IS SHOWN IN THIS MOTION PICTURE!
All the more
revealing in color!
Persons under 18 absolutely prohibited
from entering this theatre.
Obviously,
Rated
X

1

1 **Scenes from *The Ecstasies of Women* (1969).**

★ *THE WIZARD OF GORE* ★
★ *THE GORE-GORE GIRLS* ★

# CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# Herschell shoots his last two gore pictures

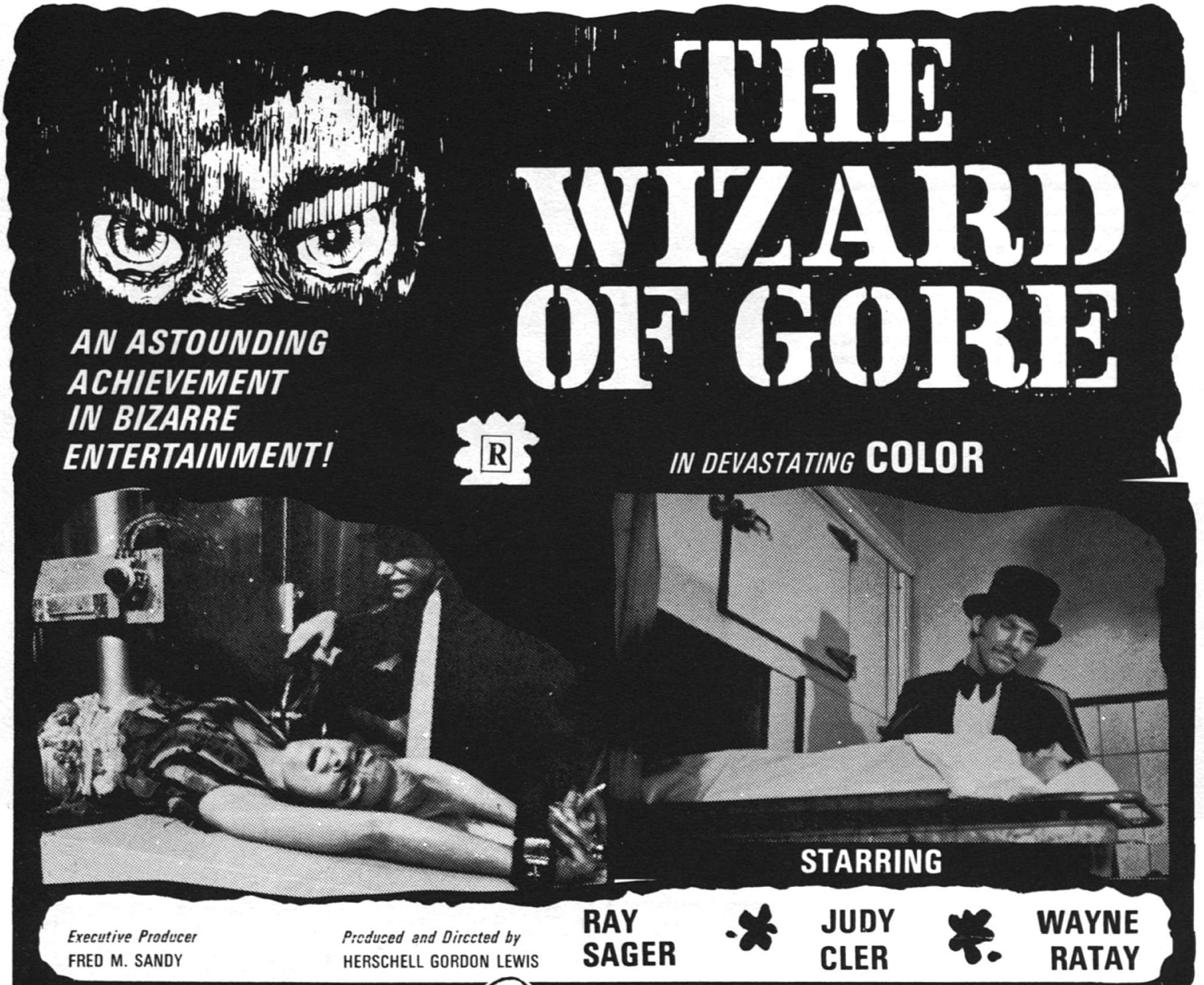
***The Wizard of Gore* is Herschell's Pirandello-like variation on the familiar theme of Illusion Vs. Reality in which a small-time magician, Montag the Magnificent, attempts to make his reputation by performing mutilation tricks on stage, tricks which appear to the audience to be totally harmless, but within an hour after the female volunteers leave the theatre, Montag's bloody illusions have suddenly become ghastly realities. One woman is sawed in half with an electric chainsaw, while another has a large, metal spike pounded through her head from ear to ear, and a third is drilled through the tummy with a huge punch press. Still two more are forced to swallow sharp swords.**

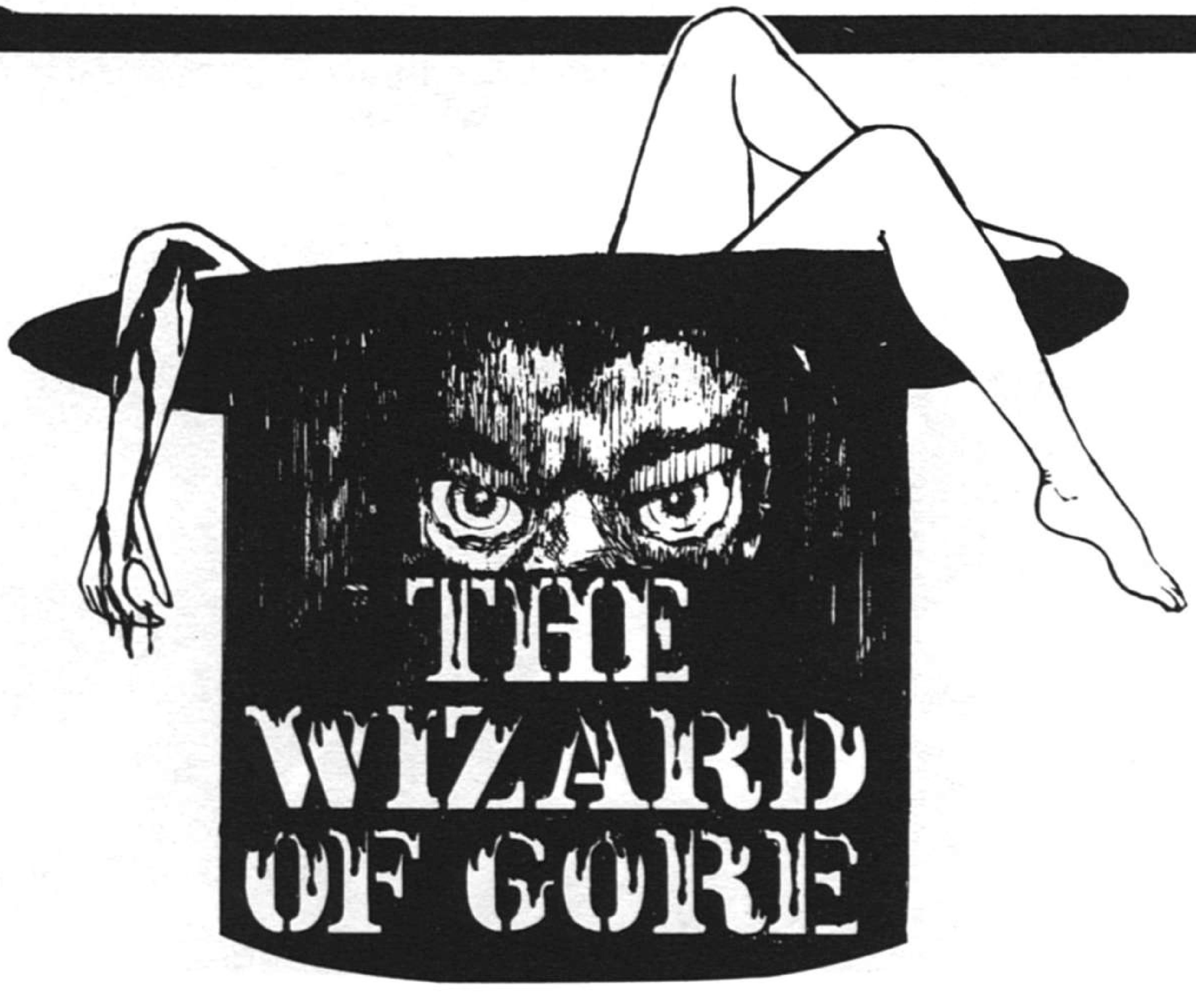
Having seen Montag's act with her boyfriend, Jack, Sherry Carson, a local TV personality and host of a show called *Housewife's Coffee Break,* determines to have Montag as a guest on her show. On their way home from Montag's performance, Sherry and Jack stumble upon the body of Montag's first victim being taken away by an ambulance. Jostled by the milling crowd of sensation-seekers, Sherry's hand brushes against the victim's hand and is stained with blood. She wipes the blood off in disgust. The police detectives charged to the case, Harlan and Kramer, admit to being completely stumped by the homicide.

Sherry meets with Montag and asks him to appear on her show. At first he refuses, but then, after spotting the ghostly stigmata of his victim's blood on her hand, he assents. As a sidebar, let me add that Montag has been stealing his victims' bodies from their graves, though for what ghoulish purpose, we can only surmise.

When he appears on Sherry's TV show, Montag not only hypnotises the audience in the studio, but everyone at home as well. At which time the bloody stigmata appears on everyone's hand—except for Jack, who had not been looking at the monitor during Montag's opening bit and had therefore not been hypnotised. Montag's plan is to do away with Sherry, as well as the detectives assigned to the case, right on the air—by throwing them into a fiery furnace to be used in his next trick. But Jack intervenes at the last moment, pushing Montag into the furnace instead. Sherry and the others are saved.

Later in her apartment, Sherry and Jack try to puzzle out the mystery of Montag. Suddenly, Jack peels away his face *Mission Impossible*-style and reveals himself to be Montag; immediately he starts ripping Sherry's guts out with his bare hands. Instead of being terrified, however, Sherry laughs in Montag's face, telling him that she too has magical powers, and, presto, she transports both of them back to the beginning of the film, condemning Montag to commit his bloody deeds over and over again, while Sherry


THE WIZARD OF GORE
AN ASTOUNDING ACHIEVEMENT IN BIZARRE ENTERTAINMENT!
R
IN DEVASTATING COLOR
STARRING
Executive Producer FRED M. SANDY
Produced and Directed by HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS
RAY SAGER
JUDY CLER
WAYNE RATAY


THE WIZARD OF GORE

and Jack sit in the audience watching. Turning to Jack after Montag's latest performance, Sherry says: "You know what I think? I think he's a phony." *The End.*

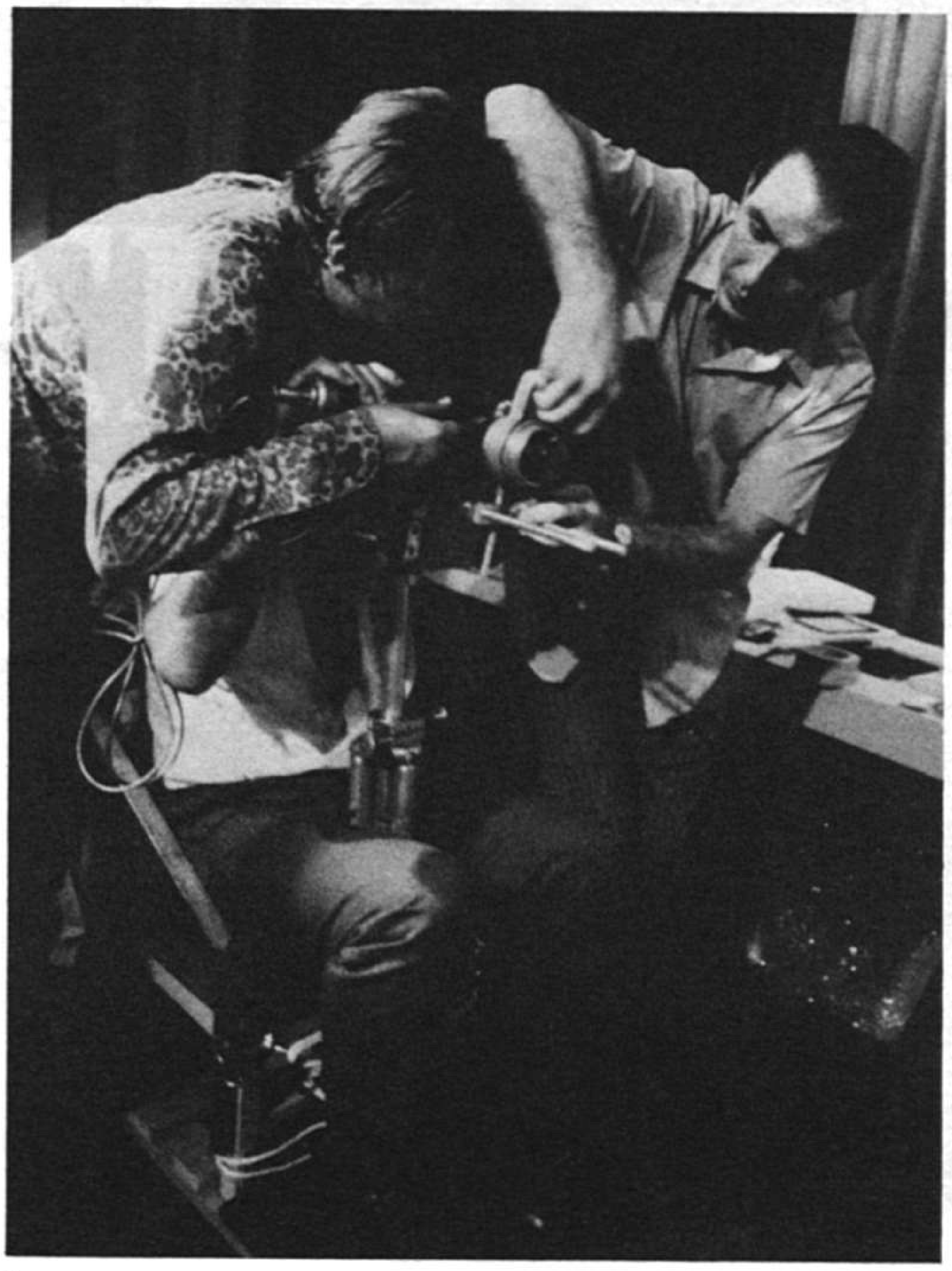
*Wizard* was shot in Chicago and several of its suburbs during the early summer of 1970. The picture had a three-week schedule: one week of pre-production followed by two weeks of actual shooting. It was produced and directed by Herschell from an original screenplay by Allen Kahn, a copywriter in his ad agency. Fred Sandy of Mayflower Pictures was the executive producer; Allison Louise Downe served as assistant director.

Again Herschell used real locations; he employed no artificial sets of any kind. The scenes of Montag performing his grisly stage tricks were shot in the auditorium of a Highland Park grammar school during summer recess. Sherry's TV show scenes were filmed at an actual television station just north of the Illinois border in Wisconsin. Scenes involving a newspa-

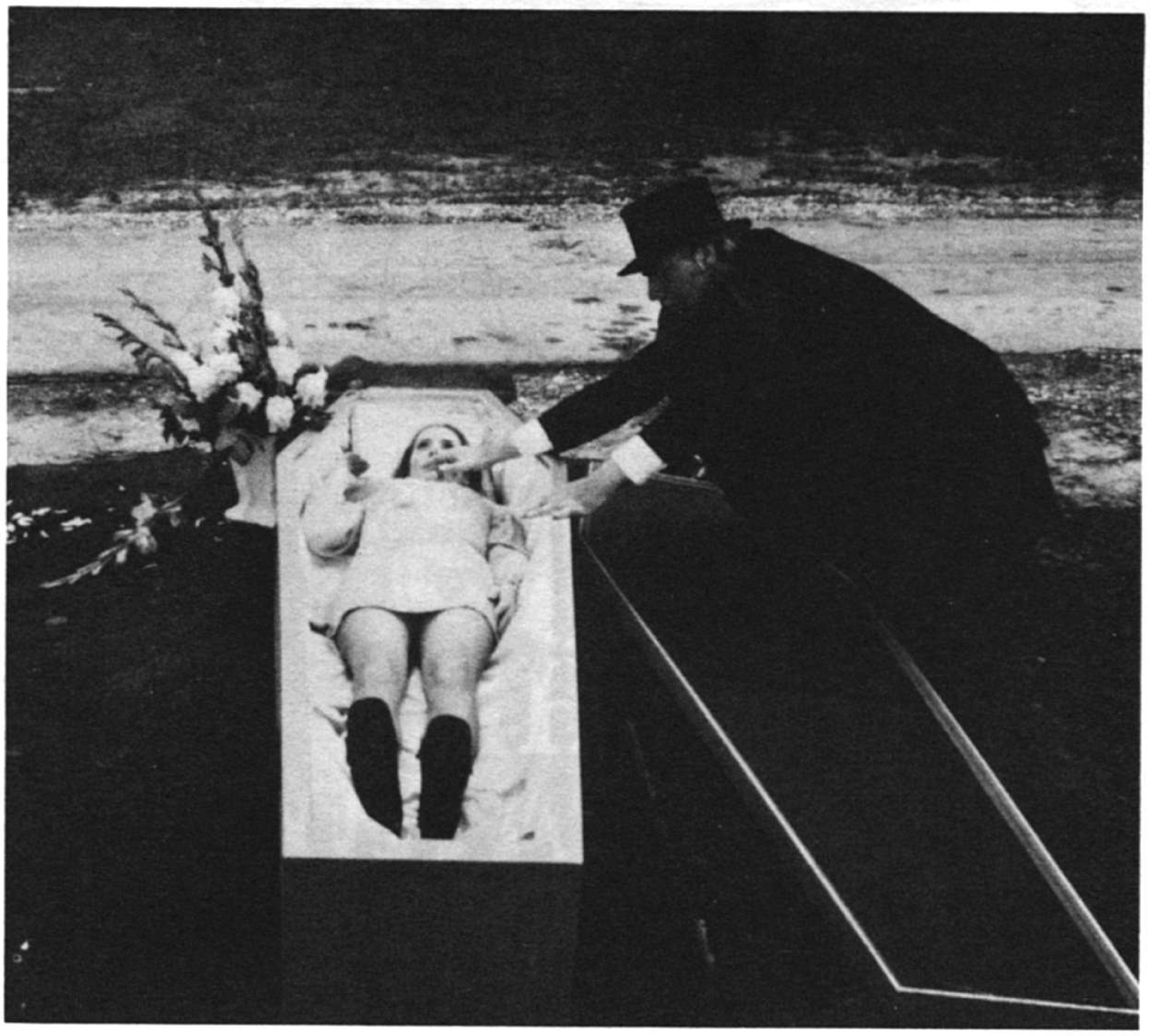
1 **HGL (seated in chair holding camera) is obscured by assistant crew members John Sezonov (right) and the author while shooting rotating special effects shots for *The Wizard of Gore* (1970).**

2 **The punch press scene from *The Wizard of Gore.***

3 **Montag (Ray Sager) robs the body of one of his victims from a local cemetery. From *The Wizard of Gore.* Six feet below the prop coffin rests the real thing.**


1

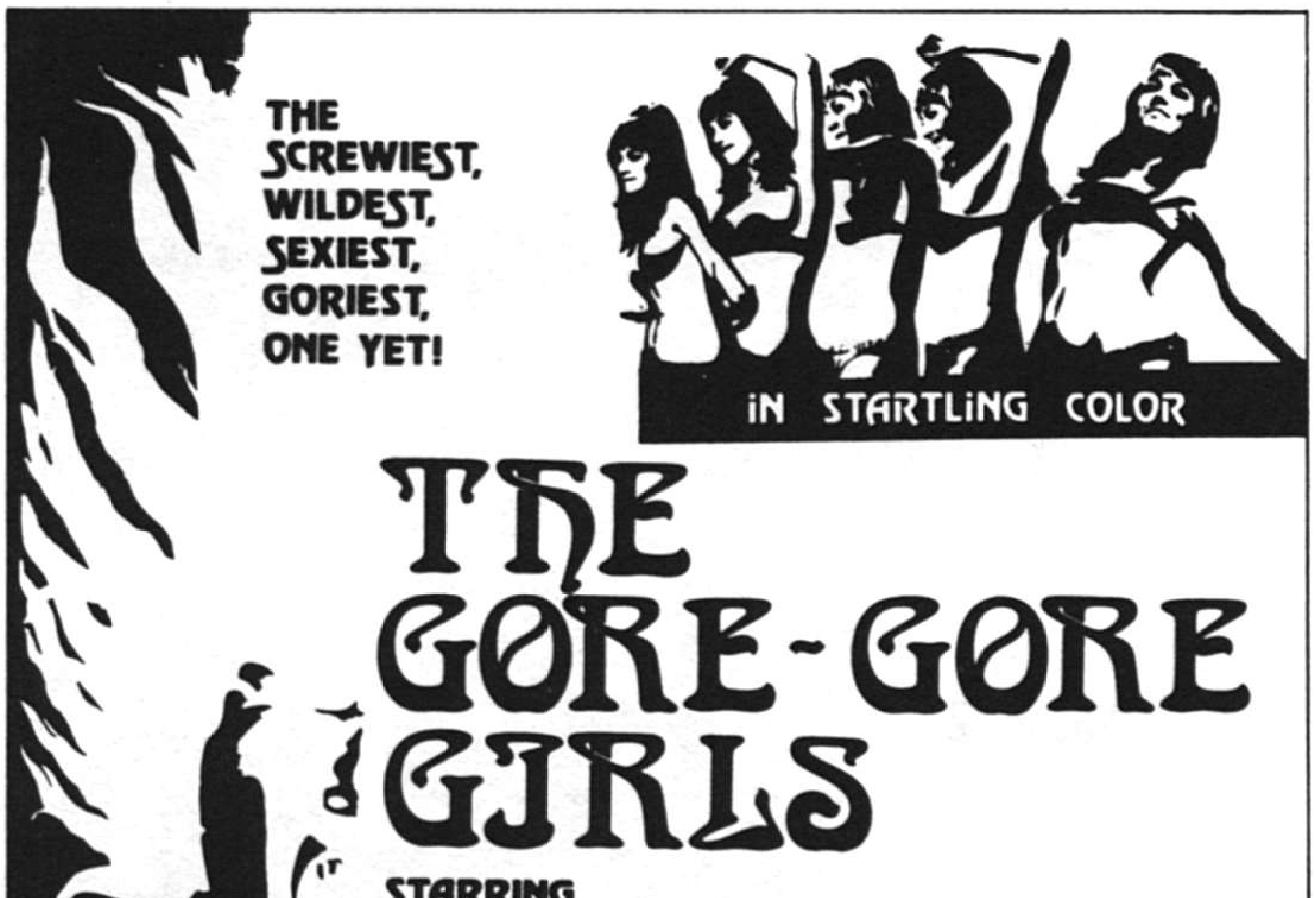
2

3


per office were shot at Lerner Newspapers in Chicago, the company that also printed the fake newspapers whose lurid headlines figure prominently in the picture.

We shot the cemetery scenes in a real cemetery located in a suburb south of Chicago. Its redneck owner even allowed us to place our prop coffin over an open grave that had just been used; in fact, as we were arriving to shoot, the funeral procession was just leaving. For his ghoulish cooperation, he was given a small role in the film. He appears as the mortuary attendant who is eventually surprised and killed by Montag in the embalming room.

The embalming room scenes were filmed in an actual mortuary owned by a Chicago alderman who had loaned it to us for the film. The cadavers under the sheets in these scenes are real corpses. But we never uncovered or disturbed them in any way. We just allowed them to quietly make their motion picture debuts



THE SCREWIEST, WILDEST, SEXIEST, GORIEST, ONE YET!

IN STARTLING COLOR

THE GORE-GORE GIRLS

STARRING
FRANK KREFT AMY FERRELL HEDDA LUBIN
SPECIAL GUEST STAR
HENNY YOUNGMAN

R

PRODUCED & DIRECTED
HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS

Released By
LEWIS MOTION PICTURE ENTERPRISES

in as peaceful, though posthumous, a way as possible.

As we were shooting these scenes, a thunderstorm began to whip up outside and certain members of the crew grew somewhat spooked by their surroundings. Others, including Herschell and myself, took the situation in our stride. We were there to shoot a picture, and the mere presence of real dead bodies in the same room with us was neither frightening nor relevant to our purpose—though I must admit now that I did feel some slight apprehension later when I had to walk down a long, dark hall past viewing rooms filled with open caskets of the deceased in order to find a men's room.

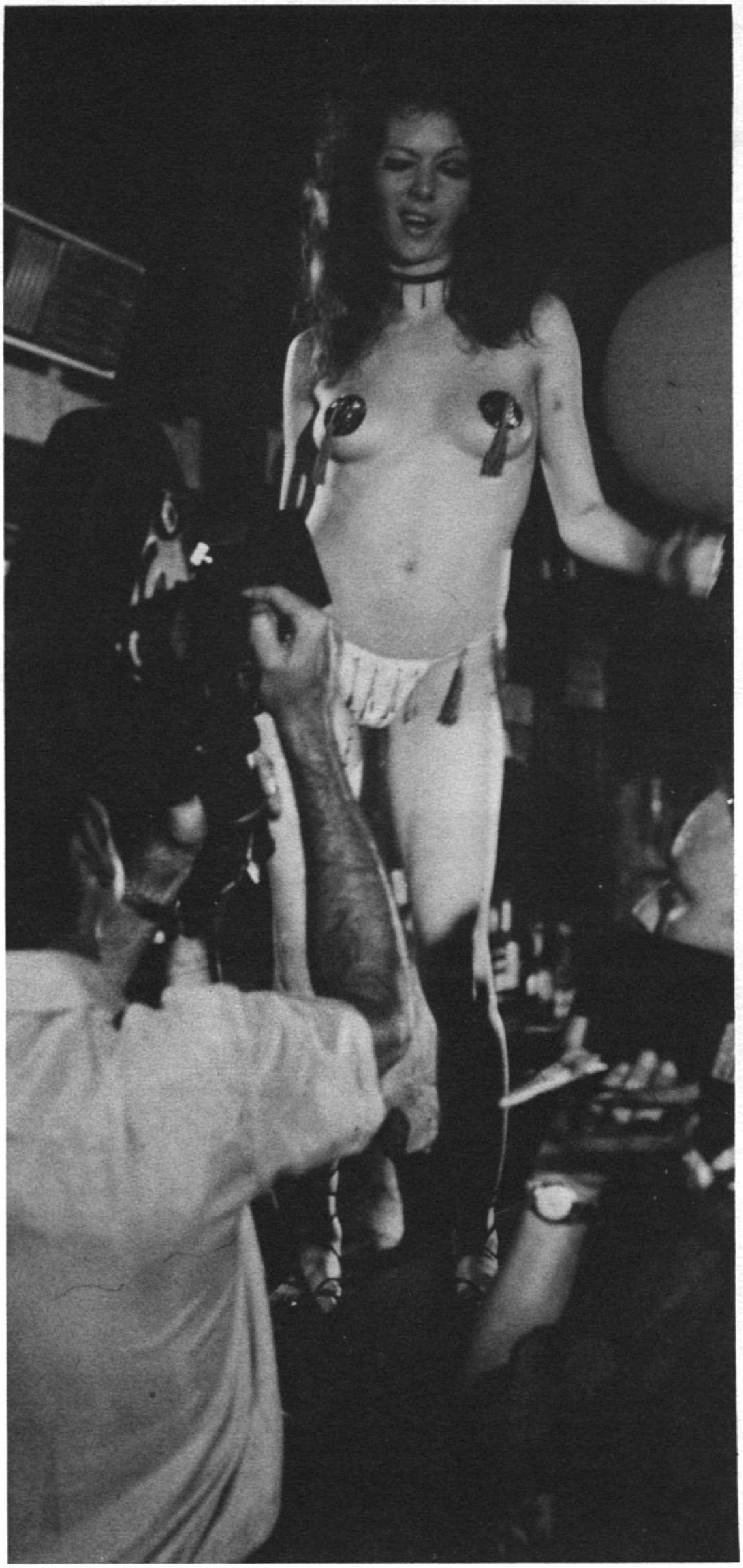
When it came time to film the scene in which Montag opens one of the mortuary's refrigerators to reveal the body of one of his victims on a slab, the actress playing the victim balked. She was willing to prostrate herself on the slab, but she refused to be shut up inside. Thinking

4 **After lensing his master shot with the Mitchell, HGL moves in for some insert close-ups of a go-go dancer's routine, using the Arriflex, during the production of *The Gore-Gore Girls.* The author (right) is holding the camera's battery.**

5 **The mystery killer, soon to be revealed as Marlene (Hedda Lubin), menaces heroine Nancy Weston with the bottle of acid "Made in Poland."**

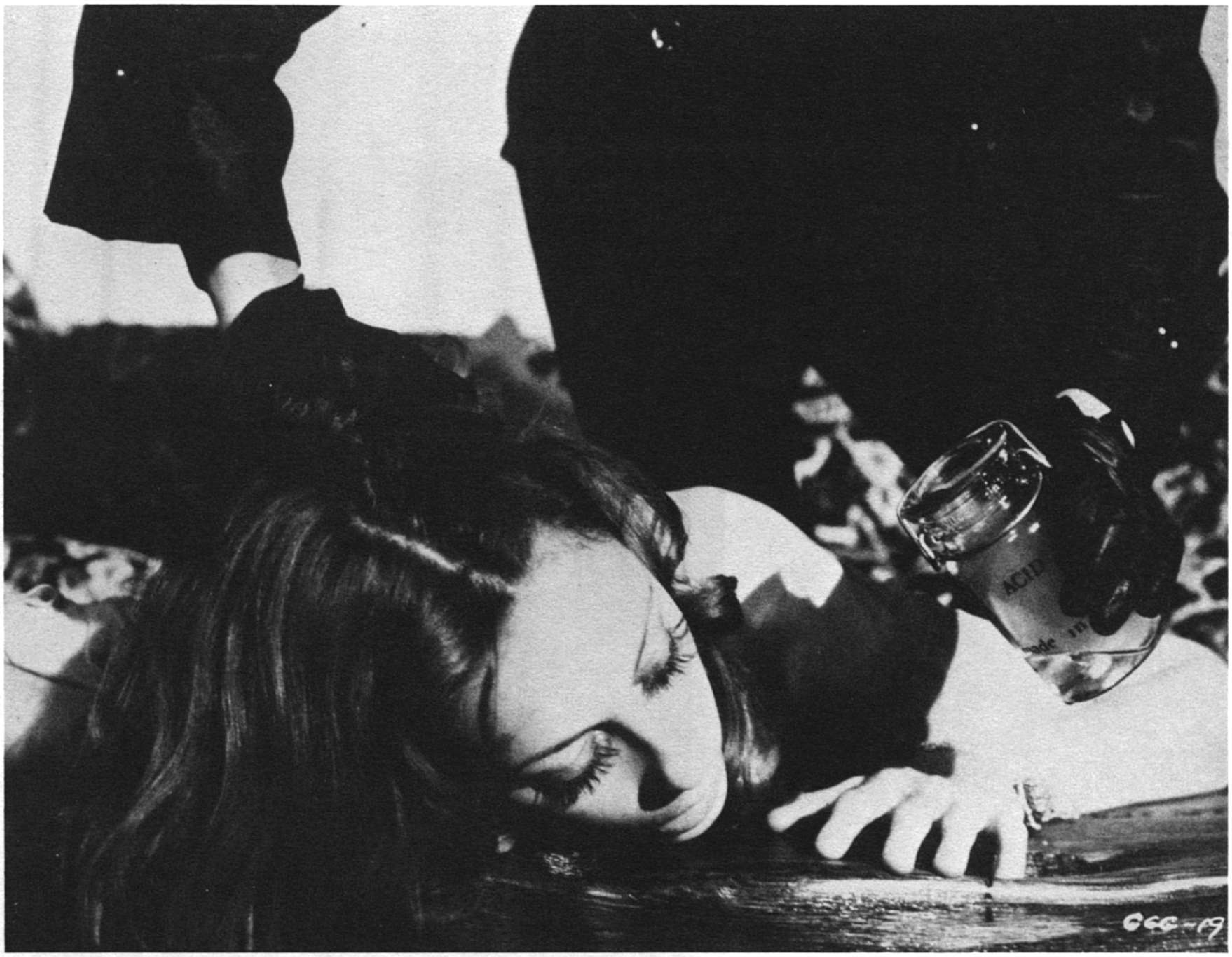
6 **Go-go dancer Lola Prize has her throat slit by the mystery killer.**

4



quickly, Herschell substituted a less squeamish member of the crew for the actress, covering up the replacement's face with a sheet for the long shot. When the refrigerator was opened and it came time to shoot the close-ups, the real actress took her rightful place on the slab.

The gore effects in Montag's act were produced with standard make-up and magician's tricks. For example, the decapitation of Montag himself which opens the picture was accomplished by using a trick guillotine that could be made functional or non-functional at will. A fake severed head with a life mask and a gory neck stump made from sheep parts and stage blood plus some fast editing helped to complete the illusion. We did the chainsaw sequence using one of the oldest tricks in the book: two women simulating one. The table that supported the body had holes in its top through which one woman, the victim, stuck her upper body while the second woman



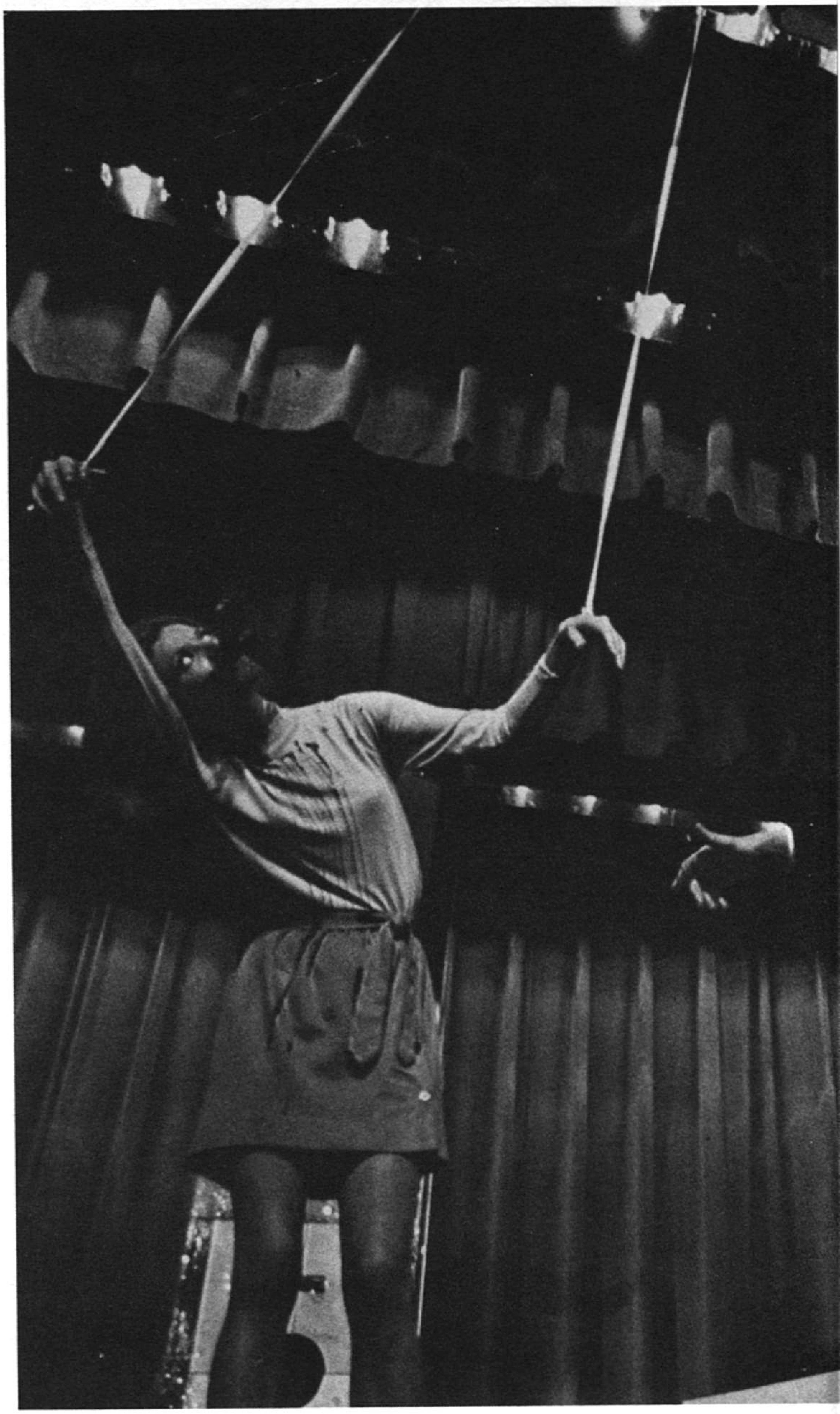
5

6

stuck her legs through the other. A fake midsection was then constructed to link the two. It was filled with animal organs, mortician's wax and prophylactics full of stage blood.

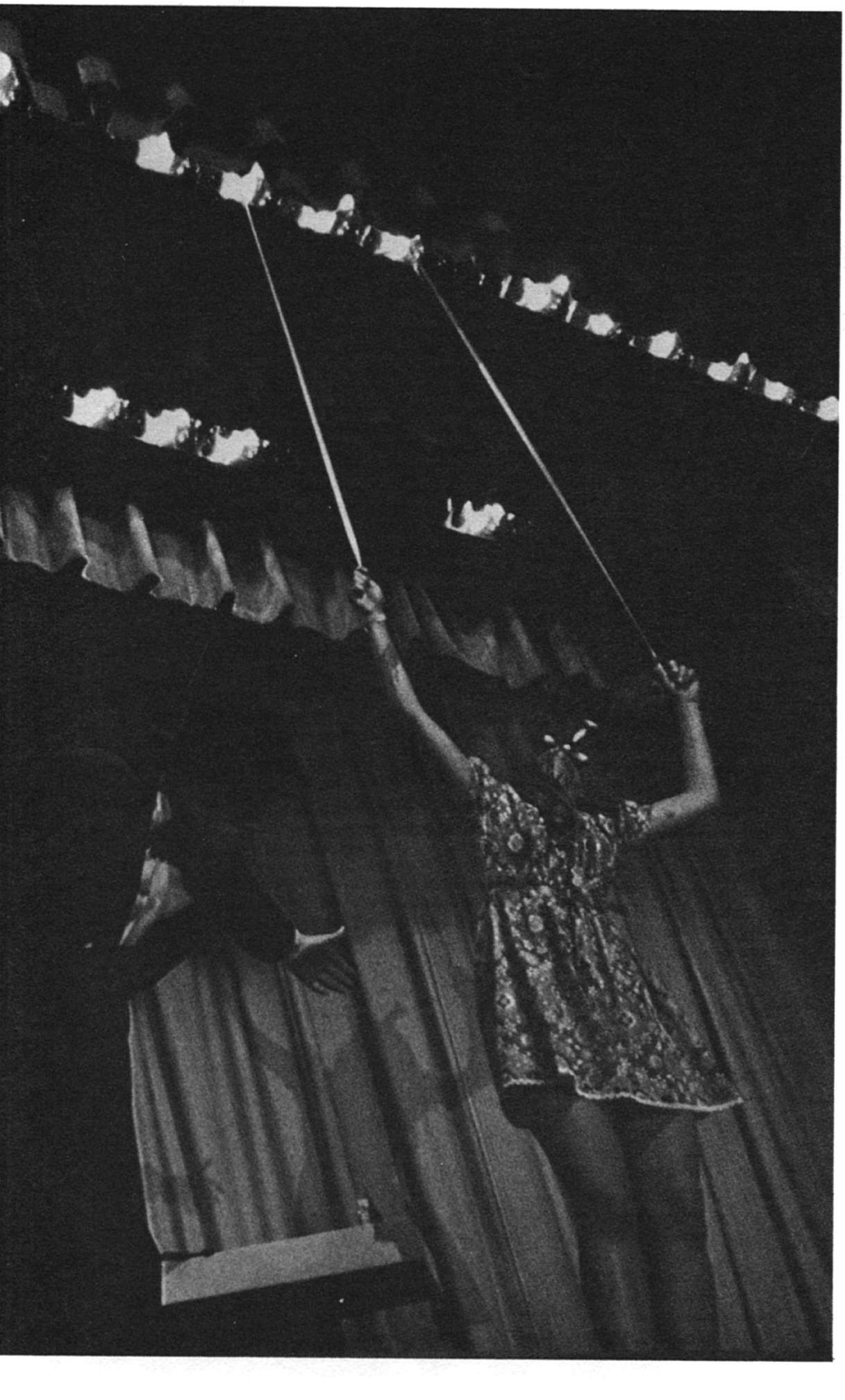
An amusing incident occurred while filming this sequence. We had set up a head and shoulders close-up of the victim, framed so as not to include the saw. While Herschell was shooting the close-ups of her screaming with his Cineflex, another crew member and I stood outside the frame squirting her with stage blood and throwing small chunks of raw meat at her to simulate the tearing of the saw through her flesh. Suddenly one of these pieces accidentally went into her mouth and stuck there. When Herschell yelled "cut," the actress, who had so far been a real trouper, was up in a flash and bounding for the restroom to do what many who have viewed this scene from a theatre seat have probably felt like doing ever since.

7 **Montag the Magnificent takes a bow at the finale of his bloody sword swallowing trick in which his female volunteers seem to have bitten off more than they can chew.**



The spike through the head trick was done using a fake cardboard spike as well as a real one; gore make-up was applied to the actress' head as well as to a dummy with a life mask of her face. Again, sharp editing of the various before and after shots of this sequence helped to complete the illusion. The punch press sequence was handled in much the same way as the earlier chainsaw routine. By the way, because this was such a messy film, Herschell was foresighted enough to make sure that each victim was supplied with three identical costumes: one for her to wear during the gore scenes, one for her substitute dummy to wear while being "mutilated" and a third to be kept clean for before and after scenes as well as for possible retakes.

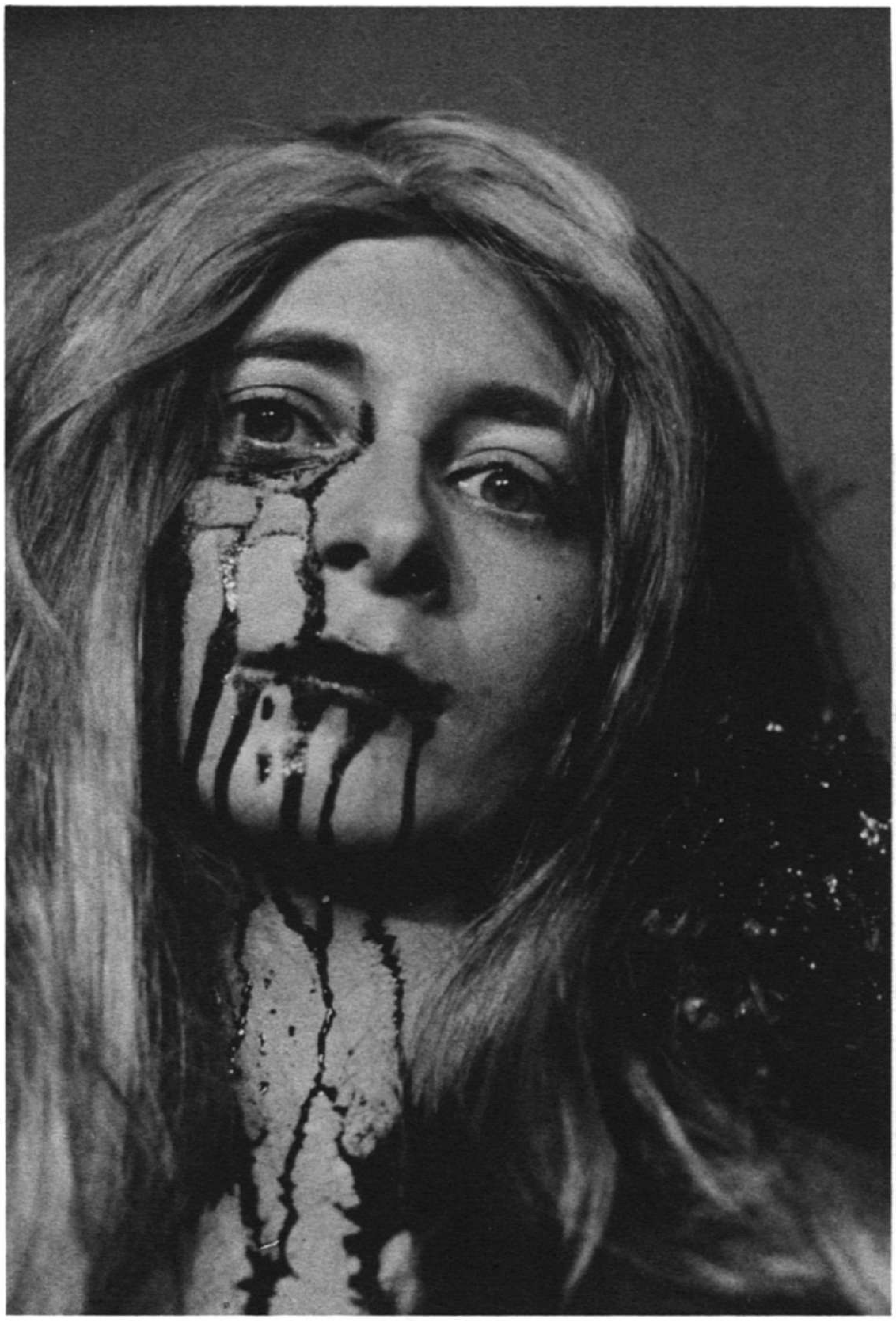
Ray Sager, who plays Montag, was in his mid-to-late twenties though the script had called for an older man. He had been a regular in the Lewis stock company since *The Gruesome Twosome*. He


7

got the part by default when the original Montag, a much older man in his mid-fifties, turned prima donna at the first reading of the script. Herschell would have none of that, of course; and so that actor was out and Ray, being handy, was in.

Ray was the soul of cooperation. He allowed his hair to be greyed daily, was never late and always knew his lines. Unfortunately, he did have a great deal of trouble manipulating the simple magic tricks he had to perform. This resulted in a number of retakes and a great deal of hazing from the rest of the cast and crew. Ray's clumsiness as a magician came especially to the fore when it was time to shoot the scene where Montag forces his two female victims to swallow sword blades. Special trick swords were employed whose thin metal blades would coil up like springs when inserted into the girls' mouths. Ray's problems with them seemed endless. First they

8, 9 **The real actress all gored up for the metal spike through the head scene. Followed by the dummy with life mask (and sheep's eyes). Note the point of the spike emerging from the ear.**



8

would bend while he was trying to insert them, or they would roll up to their hilts in full view of the camera while still outside the victims' mouths. A cheer arose when Ray finally got them to work properly. When we finished the picture, we presented him with an honorary Ray Sager Manual Dexterity Award.

One scene in *The Wizard of Gore* which illustrates Herschell's technical ingenuity involved the close-up of Sherry's hand when the ghostly stigmata appears. This effect was achieved entirely in camera. Herschell simply back wound the film to produce in-camera dissolves. The result is very effective and looks as good as if it had been done optically in a special effects house—which would, of course, have been a lot more expensive to do.

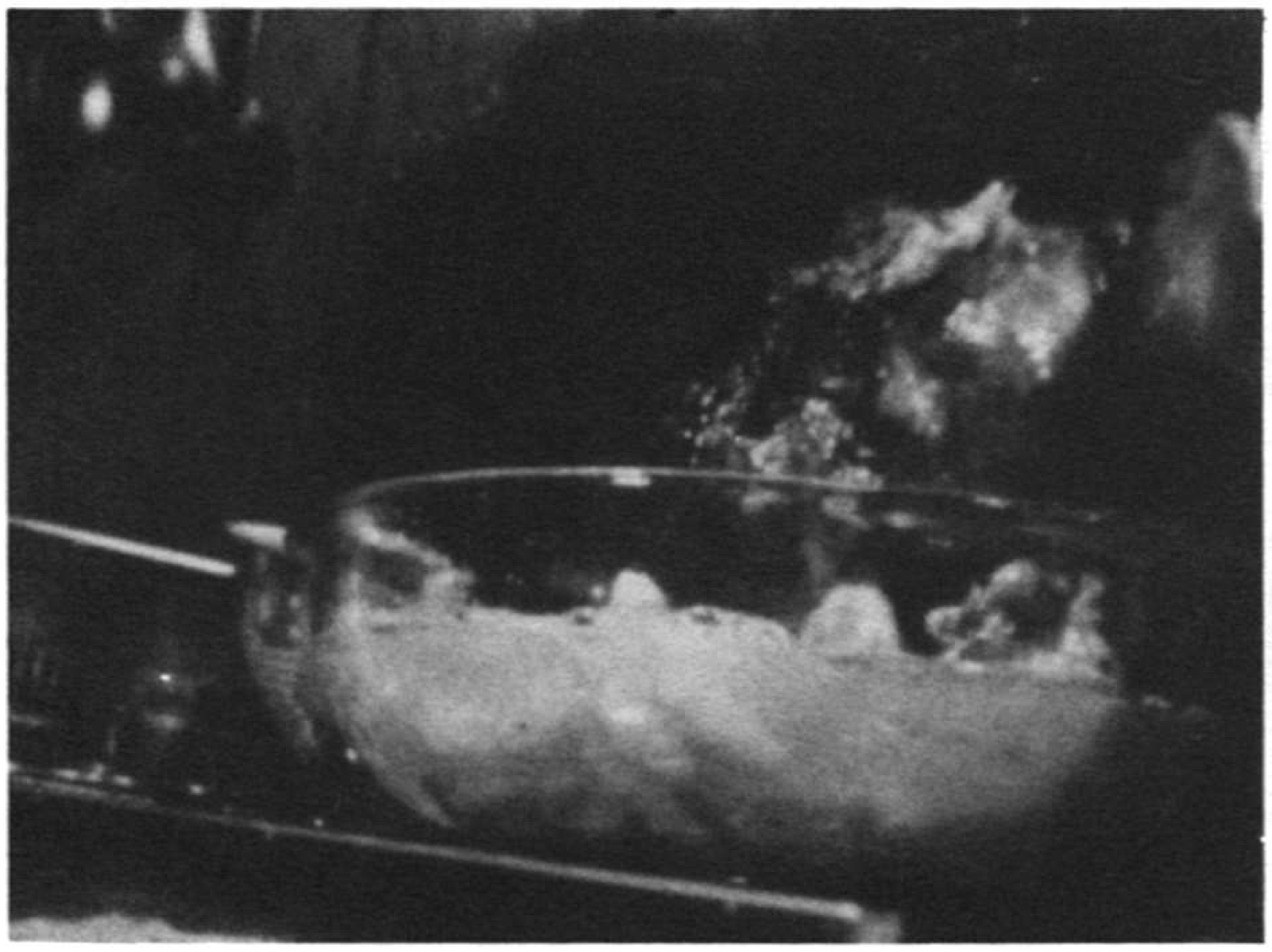
When we shot the scenes involving Montag's fire trick at the end of the film in the Wisconsin TV studio, the prop, which had been described in the script as a

10

10, 11 **Here's the boiling oil sequence from *The Gore-Gore Girls*. Notice the results in the second photo.**

9

11



horizontal, open-ended barrel of flames, ended up as a topless chest with three metal walls and a floor. Undaunted, we put some wood in the enclosure so that it would burn and poured some flammable liquid on it. We also had some of the same liquid poured in a metal film can which was held under the camera lens so that the flames would roar up to give the illusion of a raging inferno. Lighting the liquid, we proceeded to film the sequence as well as fill the entire studio with acrid smoke. It took quite a while for the smoke to clear out of the studio. I'm sure anyone close by must have thought the entire place was burning down.

The climax of the film in which Montag disembowels Sherry with his bare hands was lensed in a plush high-rise penthouse apartment on Chicago's Lake Shore Drive. The actress who played Sherry (Judy Cler) wore a vest filled with raw meat. On cue, Montag ripped her open

12 **Left to right, reporter Nancy Weston (Amy Farrell) and private detective Abraham Gentry (Frank Kress) question an unsavory hippie character (screenplay author Alan J. Dachman) about the mysterious go-go girl killer.**

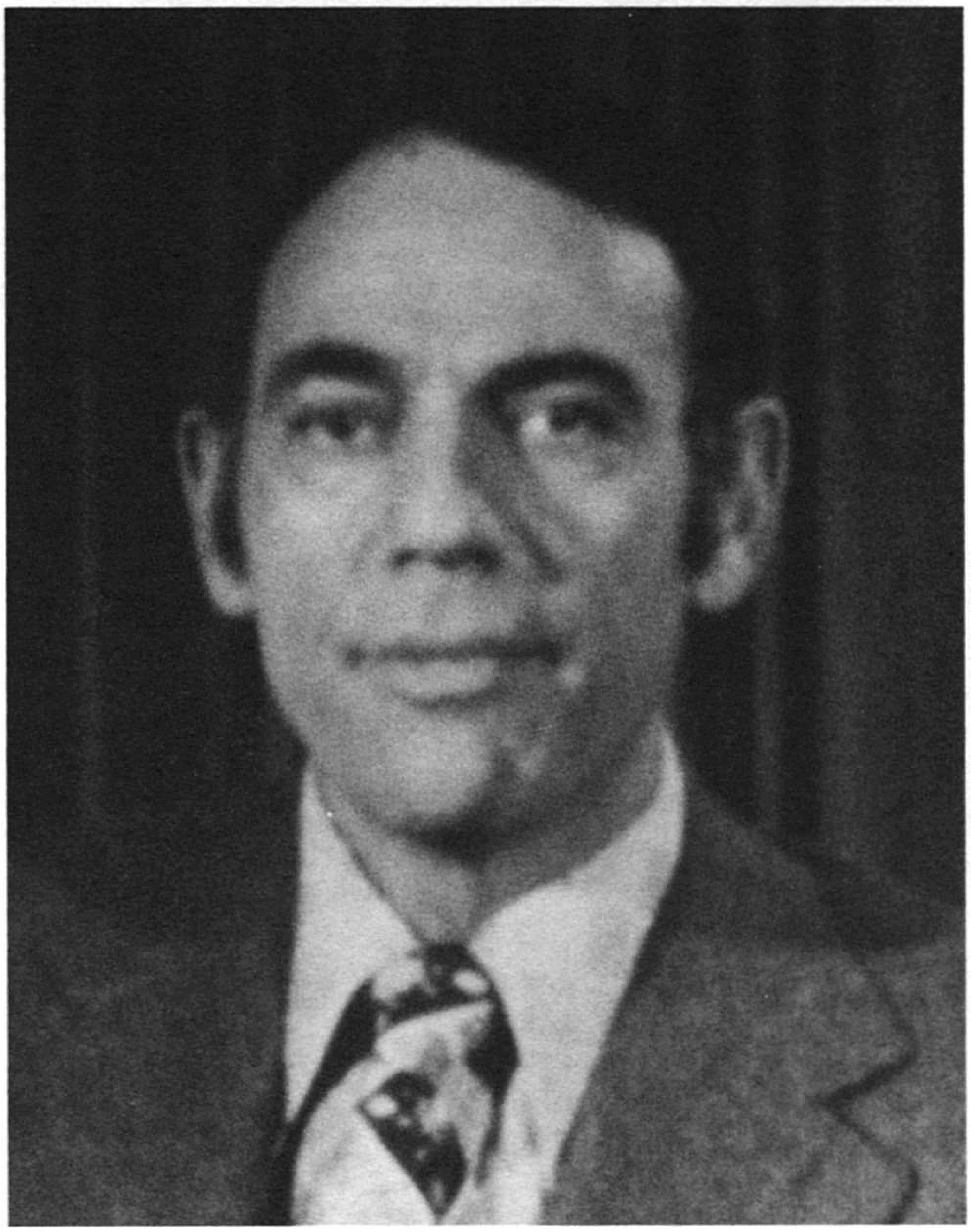
13 **Producer-director Herschell Gordon Lewis advises young children and the overly sensitive to leave the theatre before the onset of the Coming Attractions trailer for *The Gore-Gore Girls.***

14 **The first go-go dancer victim of the mystery killer is about to have her face smashed repeatedly into her dressing room mirror.**

15 **The aftermath of having her face repeatedly slammed into a mirror, then hacked with a meat cleaver for good measure. The body is lying on the floor of Lewis' Wrigley Building office. Actually, Herschell had much better taste in carpets. What you see is a protective drop.**

12

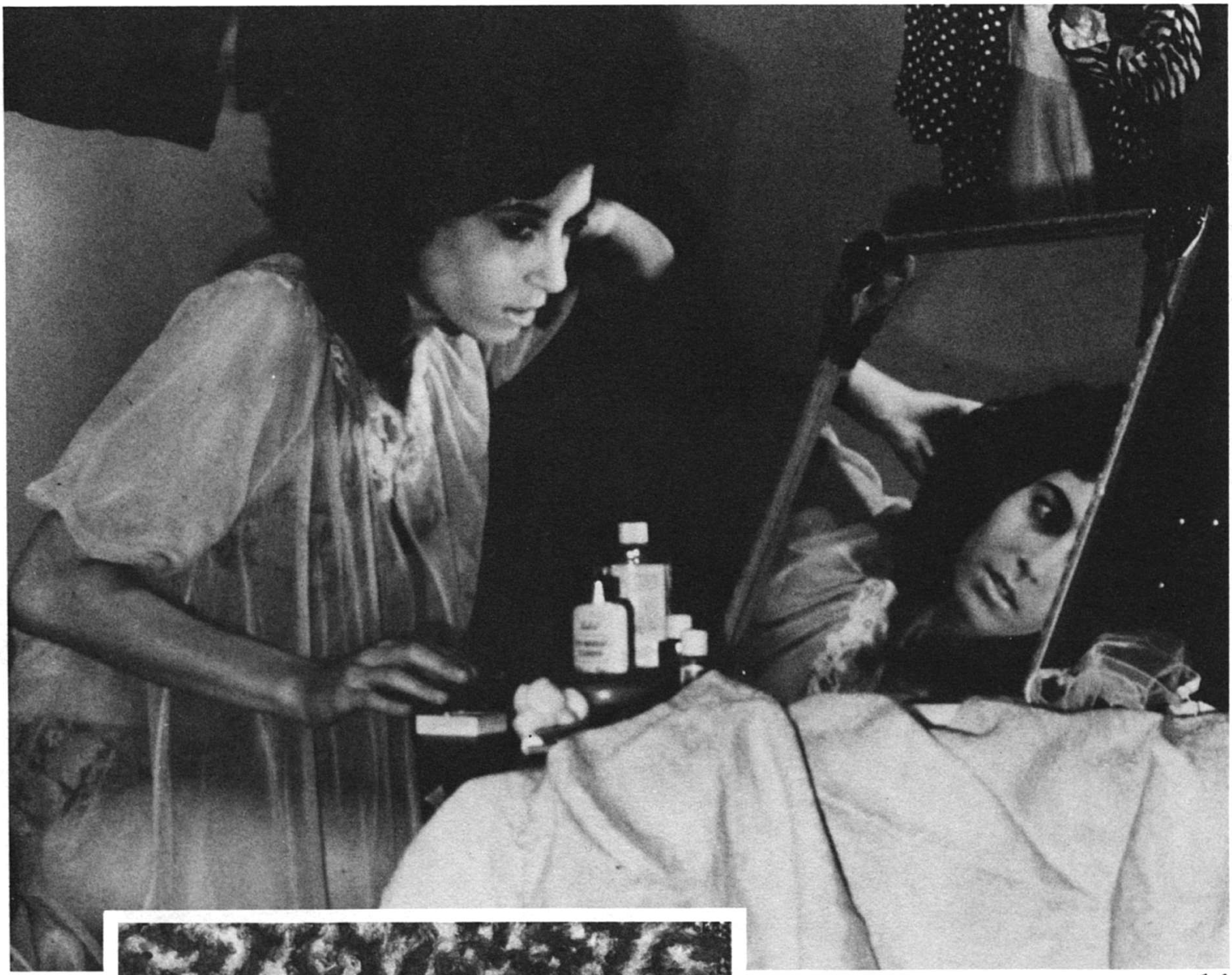
13



and you can guess the rest. Herschell shot the scene with all three of his cameras running simultaneously in order to make sure he got all the coverage he needed. It was one take or else.

Our shooting at this location grew rather complicated when our host invited a bunch of his cronies over to watch and get drunk. When it came time to shoot the scene in question, our host almost came to blows with some of his guests because they refused to keep quiet during our sync sound takes. In this atmosphere of bedlam, Herschell took Ray aside and impressed upon him the need for absolute concentration. "Ray," he said, "this is just like the house wrecking scene in *Just for the Hell of It.* Once we start shooting, there's no stopping until everything is torn to shreds." Despite the bedlam, Ray accomplished his bloody task in the one take Herschell required.

When we wrapped the picture, we bade fond farewell to two of our most un-



14

15

pleasant props: two sheep carcasses soaked in Pine-Sol that we had been carting around for over two weeks of production to accomplish our gore effects. I then did some assistant editing on the picture. But by that time, *The Wizard of Gore* was, for me, past history.

*The Gore-Gore Girls* was Herschell's last feature and his last gore film. As well as mine. He produced it after *This Stuff'll Kill Ya!* and *Year of the Yahoo*, which I will cover in the next chapter. *The Gore-Gore Girls* follows the exploits of private detective Abraham Gentry as he tries to solve a string of gory go-go girl homicides with the help of a local newspaper reporter, Nancy Weston. In the first murder scene, a dancer has her face repeatedly smashed into a dressing table mirror. She is then stabbed with a large butcher knife and hacked in the face with a meat cleaver for good measure. Charming! These gruesome mutilation effects were filmed in tight close-ups against

16 **The ghastly end of Lola Prize (Nora Alexis), a hapless go-go dancer in Lewis' *The Gore-Gore Girls.* Note the tynes of a barbecue fork stuck in her left eye socket.**

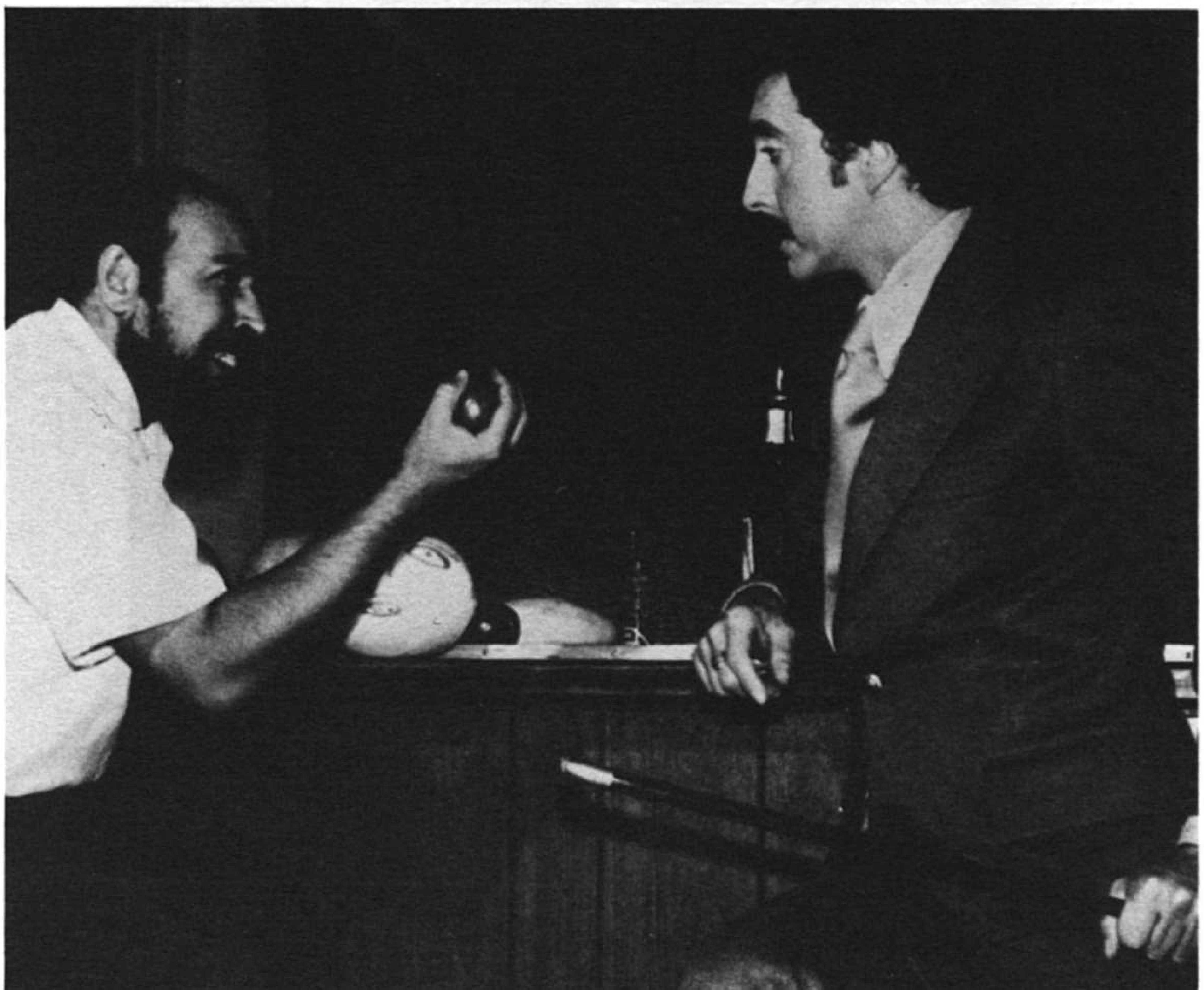
17 **Grout (Lewis' cameraman and editor, Eskandar "Alex" Ameripoor), a red herring suspect who likes to draw faces on squash and melons and then squash them with his fist, is questioned by Gentry.**

18 **Half a head? Coming right up! The cleaver hacking of the bubble gum blower.**

19 **The face of another victim is seared with an electric iron. Note the rising smoke. Yechhh!**

16

17



a sheet of background paper in the conference room of Lewis' advertising office in the Wrigley Building. A plastic tarp was placed over the carpet to prevent its being stained by stage blood. I remember we had one hell of a time getting the dummy of the victim to break the mirror. By comparison, the stabbing and the hacking effects were much easier to pull off.

A second dancer, who is chewing bubble gum at the time of her murder, is hit over the head with a large mallet, which causes a gory bubble of blood to issue from her lips. Her throat is then slit and her face mutilated. The bubble effect presented us with an interesting technical problem. We found out quickly that regular bubble gum bubbles were too fragile to contain the stage blood. The final solution to the problem was to substitute a blown up prophylactic filled with stage blood.

Another dancer, Lola Prize, is attacked

18

19

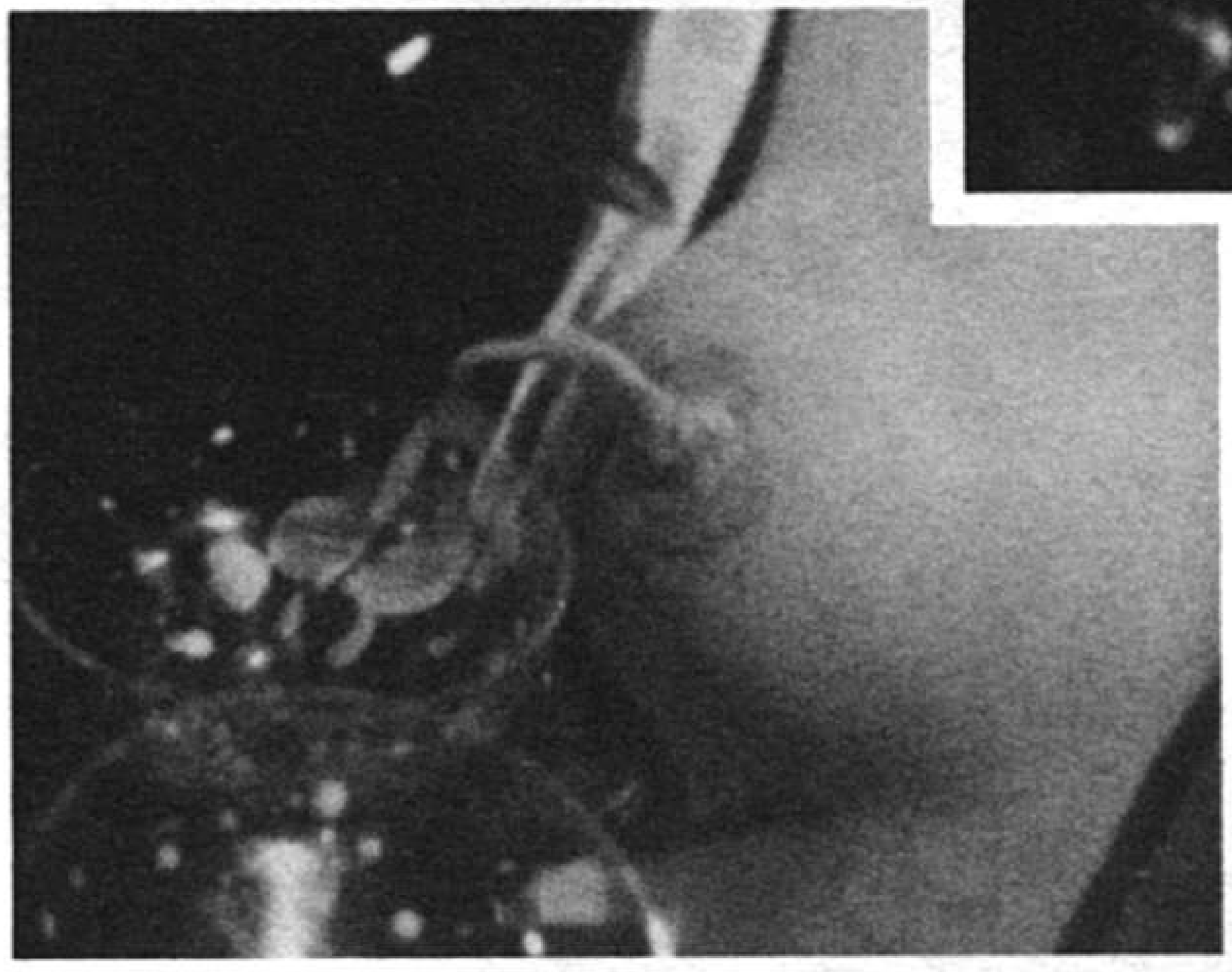
and killed after talking to Gentry. First her throat is cut. Then after removing her panties with a barbecue fork, the killer mangles her buttocks with a meat tenderizer, then pours salt and Accent into the wounds. Ouch!

Two dancers who live together as roommates are the killer's next victims. The first is ironing clothes when the murderer sneaks up behind her and slits her throat. Then he applies the hot iron to her face, turning it into a mass of charred and bleeding flesh. This effect was accomplished by using a dummy with a life mask of the actress' face—just in case you wondered. Finally, the victim's nipples are snipped off with a large pair of shears, and milk streams forth into a set of champagne glasses the killer has handy. One breast yields white milk, the other chocolate. As you can easily see, Herschell was not taking this film too seriously.

The milk effect was accomplished by shooting close-ups of a female manne-

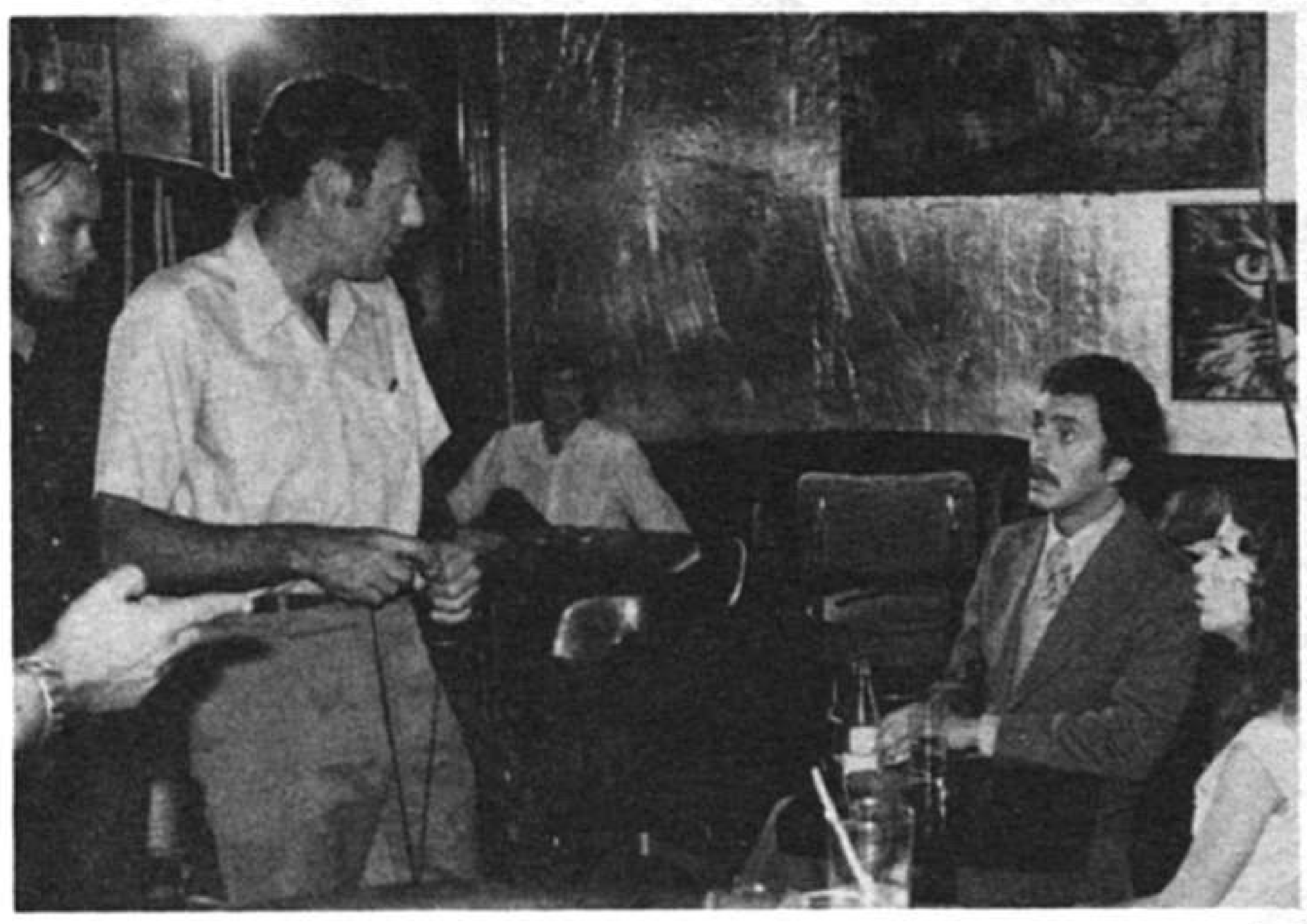
20 **The nipples of the same victim's breasts are then snipped off with a pair of shears. In these shots, chocolate milk is spurting from the nipple into a plastic champagne glass. The other nipple yields white milk.**

21 **HGL gives direction to Frank Kress (Detective Abraham Gentry) while the author, standing behind Lewis, looks on.**

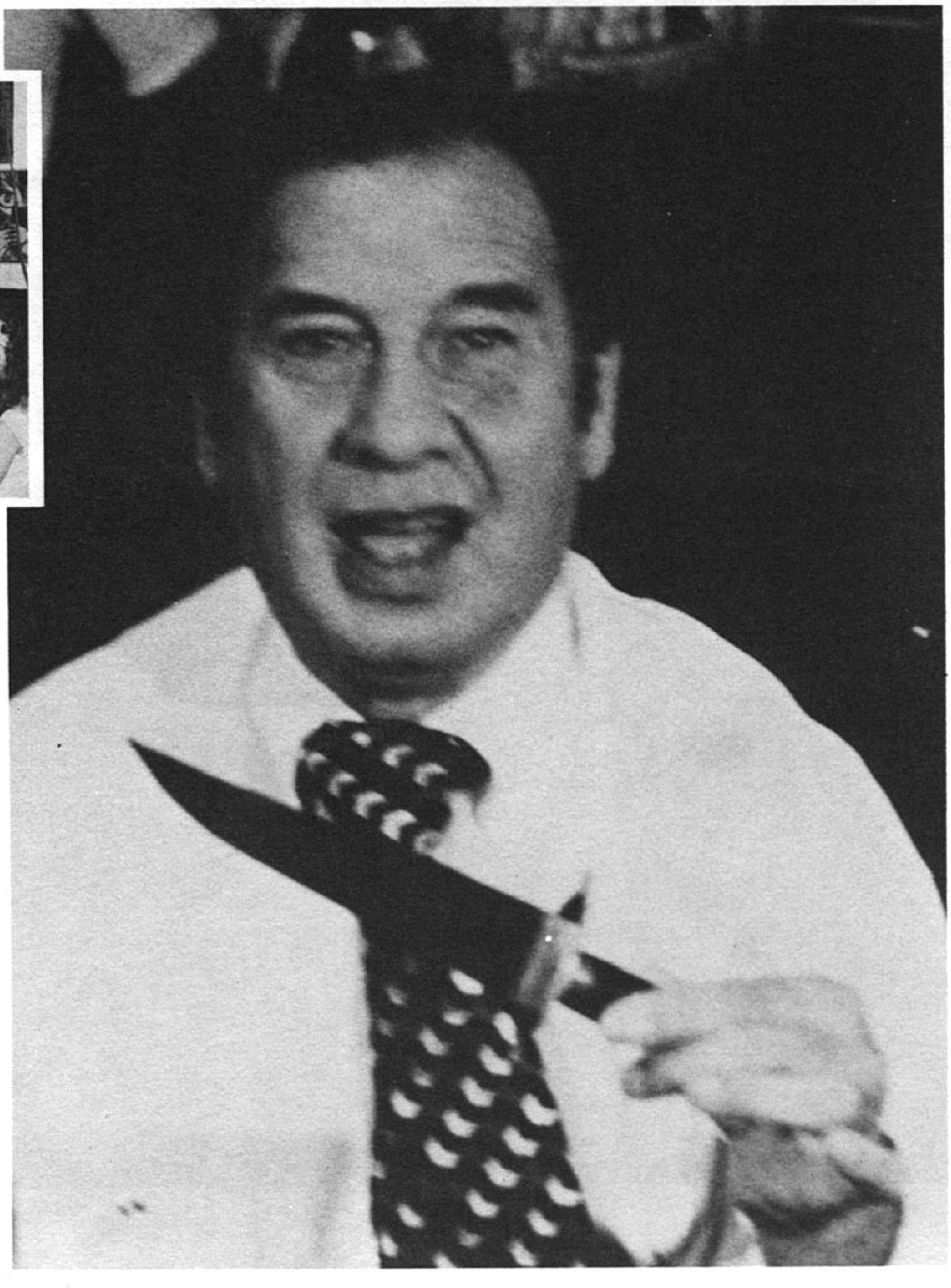


20

21



22



quin's torso with holes drilled into its breasts. Baby bottle nipples that had been inserted into the holes and disguised with mortician's wax were gaffed to plastic tubes which ran to squeeze bulbs full of milk. When the rubber nipples were snipped, the milk poured out quite nicely.

The killer then seizes the second roommate and pushes her face into a large bowl of boiling oil and french fries. To bring off this effect, the face of the girl playing the victim was pushed into a cold bowl of oil and fries that also contained tiny pellets of dry ice to produce a boiling effect. We then cut and substituted a dummy with a life mask of the actress' face and pushed it into real boiling oil.

Meanwhile, back at the plot, Gentry has discovered that all of the murdered dancers worked in nightclubs owned by Marzdone Mobilie (played by Henny Youngman). By this time Gentry has also met Marlene, a good looking but snippy waitress who also works for

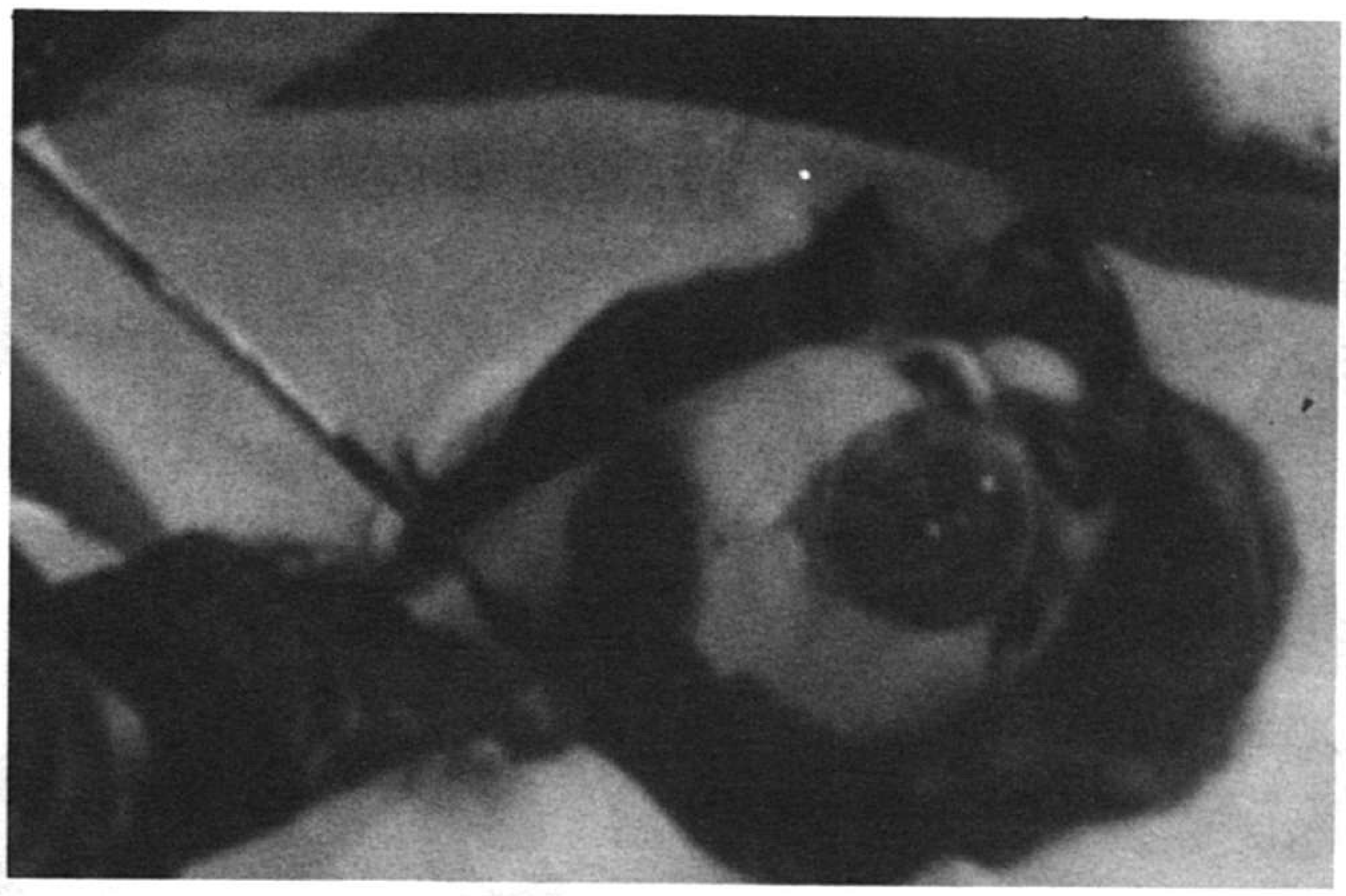
23

**22** **"Take my knife, please," says Henny Youngman as nightclub owner Marzdone Mobilie. After filming, when told that someone had paid Youngman's hotel bill, Lewis joked, "Yes, I know. Three people have already."**

**23** **A go-go dancer blows bubble gum while practicing a little autoeroticism. Soon the bubble will be filled with blood.**

**24** **The bubble gum chewing victim in *The Gore-Gore Girls* has blown her last bubble, and now her throat is being slit.**

24



Mobilie. She tries to discourage Gentry from pressing his investigation, but fails.

Gentry has two main suspects. One is Grout, a customer of Mobilie's who spends his spare time smashing melons with his fist. Another is Mary McIlhenny, a tough women's libber who had attacked Lola Prize on stage one night, causing a riot.

In order to lure the killer out into the open, Gentry persuades Marzdone Mobilie to hold an amateur stripping contest at his club. During the contest, Gentry arouses Nancy's jealousy by lavishly praising each of the contestants. Having drunk quite a bit, Nancy finally jumps up and pushes the last contestant off the stage. She then executes her own strip and is declared the winner of the contest.

After dropping Nancy off at her apartment, Gentry pretends to leave. By this time, Nancy has passed out and so she is helpless when the murderer comes to call, bearing a glass bottle marked "Acid . . . Made in Poland." But Gentry emerges from hiding at the last moment to save her, unmasking the killer who turns out to be none other than Marlene, the snippy waitress. Unmask is the right word, for Marlene is revealed to be horribly scarred with a hairless scalp and a disfigured, breastless chest, conditions which prompted her to exact maniacal revenge on those dancers who still had their beauty. Leaping from the window to escape, Marlene falls to her death onto the street below, where a car runs over her head and crushes it. "Poor Marlene—that's her all over," intones the philosophic Gentry at fade-out.

*The Gore-Gore Girls* was another three-week picture. At the beginning of the shooting, the first day and a half's rushes all came back from the lab out of focus. It turned out that an overzealous (and unknowledgeable) member of the crew had removed the pressure plate from the Mitchell in order to clean it and had then failed to replace it properly. Herschell wasted no time with anger or tears. Instead, under his direction, we re-doubled our efforts; past locations were scheduled again. For those that we couldn't reschedule, we made quick substitutions. And by the end of the two weeks allotted to shooting, we finished the picture on schedule and on budget.

# CHAPTER FIFTEEN

# *Return of the plain old country boy*

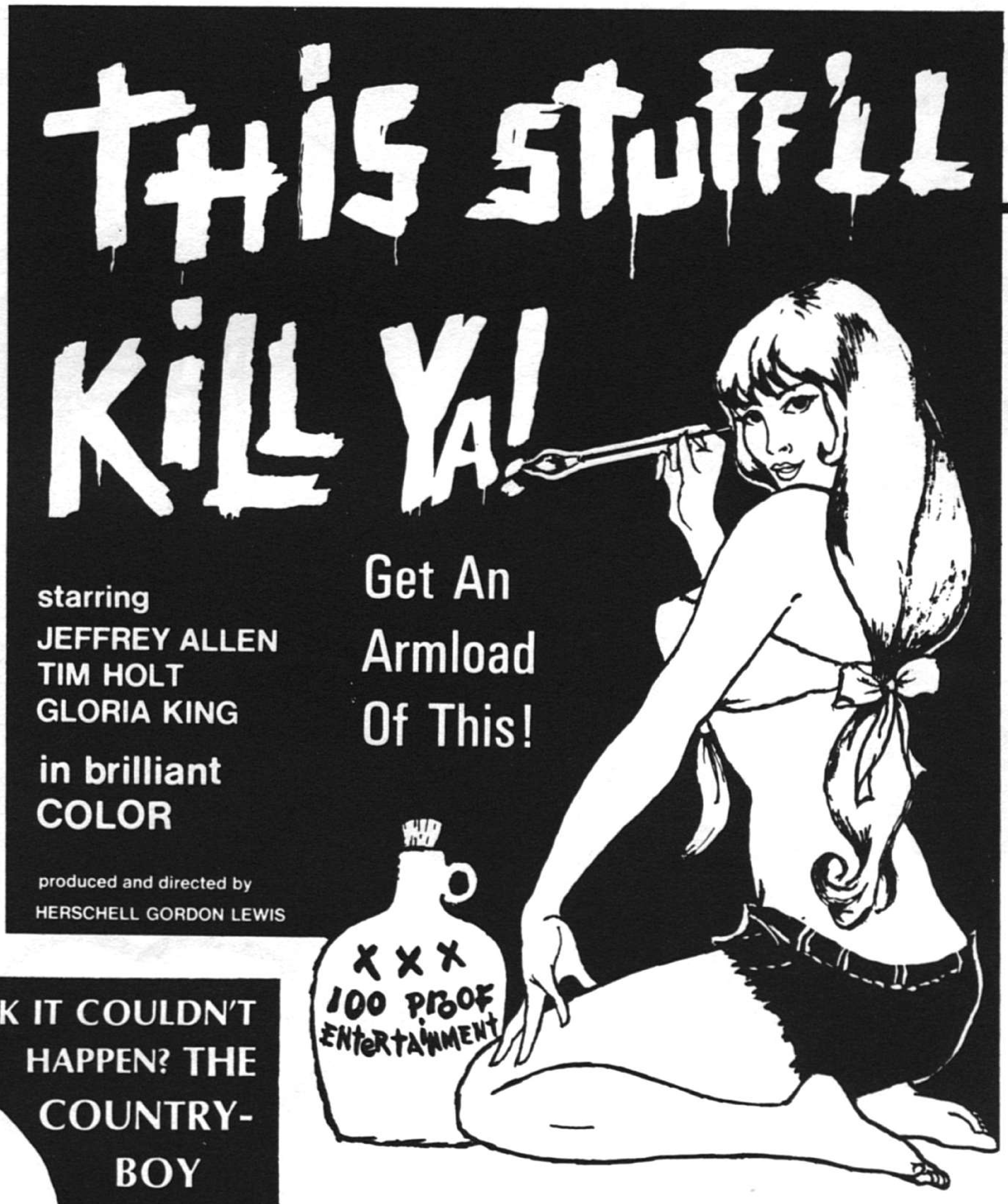
***This Stuff'll Kill Ya!* (working title *The Devil Wears Clodhoppers*) is a hillbilly moonshine epic following in the footsteps of Lewis' *Moonshine Mountain.* In fact, both pictures feature the same actor, Jeffrey Allen, in a pivotal role. They also share one song, *Love That White Lightnin'!,* penned by Lewis himself under the pseudonym of Sheldon Seymour.**

The picture was shot on the standard three-week schedule in Oklahoma City and Chakota, Oklahoma. We shot most of the interiors in Oklahoma City in an abandoned UHF TV station inside which we built our only standing set, the interior of a country church. Most of the exteriors were shot later on a large ranch just outside Chakota.

We drew our cast from the ranks of local radio personalities and students from the drama department of the nearby University of Oklahoma. Among the cast was Hollywood veteran cowboy star Tim Holt, who had also worked successfully as a dramatic actor in such prestigious films as Orson Welles' *The Magnificent Ambersons*, John Huston's *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, and John Ford's *Stagecoach* and *My Darling Clementine*. Holt, who was working as a radio time salesman at a local station, was quite disenchanted with Hollywood and the picture business as a whole and therefore discouraged any discussions about his career. Too bad. He probably had a lot of good stories in him. *This Stuff'll Kill Ya!* turned out to be his last picture before his death.

Another new addition to the company was Bill Mays, owner of Oklahoma City's Westerneer Ballroom. He supplied the ballroom's house band for the film's live country music scenes and also helped out quite a bit with local public relations, which turned out to work much in our favor. When we needed a whiskey still for a prop, an authentic one was found for us. When we wanted to shoot in a State-run liquor store, permission was quickly granted. We were like the circus come to town. Everyone we met wanted to help out for free. Even the marquee over our motel saluted us with "Welcome to Oklahoma City—Ultima Productions," the name of the production company for which the film was being made. Herschell certainly knew where to go when he wanted to shoot a picture.

Shooting in the old TV studio progressed smoothly during the first week of production. But then the rains came. The studio had a sheet metal roof which augmented the sound of the rain falling on it until we were all but deafened by its thunder. The noise eventually made it impossible for us to record a clean sound track. At first, we took a break, hoping the rain would soon stop, passing the time speculating on how they had ever produced live TV in such a place. Eventually, we decided that they had just signed off the air during inclement weather.



THIS STUFF'LL KILL YA!

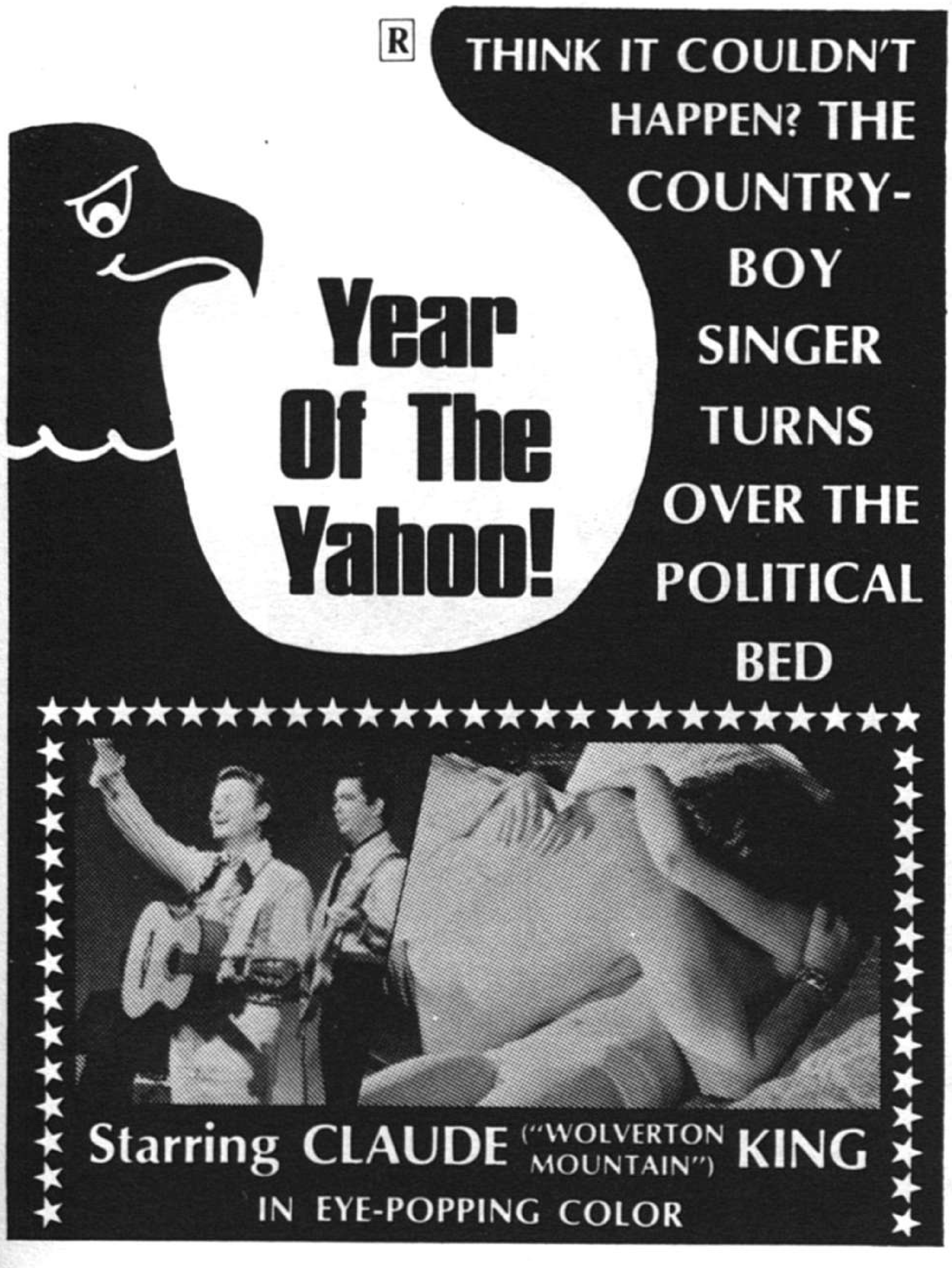
starring
JEFFREY ALLEN
TIM HOLT
GLORIA KING

in brilliant
COLOR

produced and directed by
HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS

Get An Armload Of This!

XXX
100 PROOF
ENTERTAINMENT



R

THINK IT COULDN'T HAPPEN? THE COUNTRY-BOY SINGER TURNS OVER THE POLITICAL BED

Year Of The Yahoo!

Starring CLAUDE ("WOLVERTON MOUNTAIN") KING
IN EYE-POPPING COLOR

The rain continued without let-up, however, and Herschell decided that we couldn't afford to blow any more time waiting. We would have to make the rain part of the story. A character who was set to enter from the outside was quickly outfitted with a raincoat and an umbrella and wetted down. We even added a garden hose rain effect to the matching exteriors we shot later in Chakota.

After a week's shooting in Oklahoma City, we headed east by car to the small town of Chakota to shoot exteriors on a large ranch which belonged to the local funeral director. This last connection came in especially handy when we needed a grave dug for a funeral scene. The funeral director easily provided us with a very professionally dug six-foot hole. Now, as we're traveling to Chakota, let me fill you in on the plot of *This Stuff'll Kill Ya!*

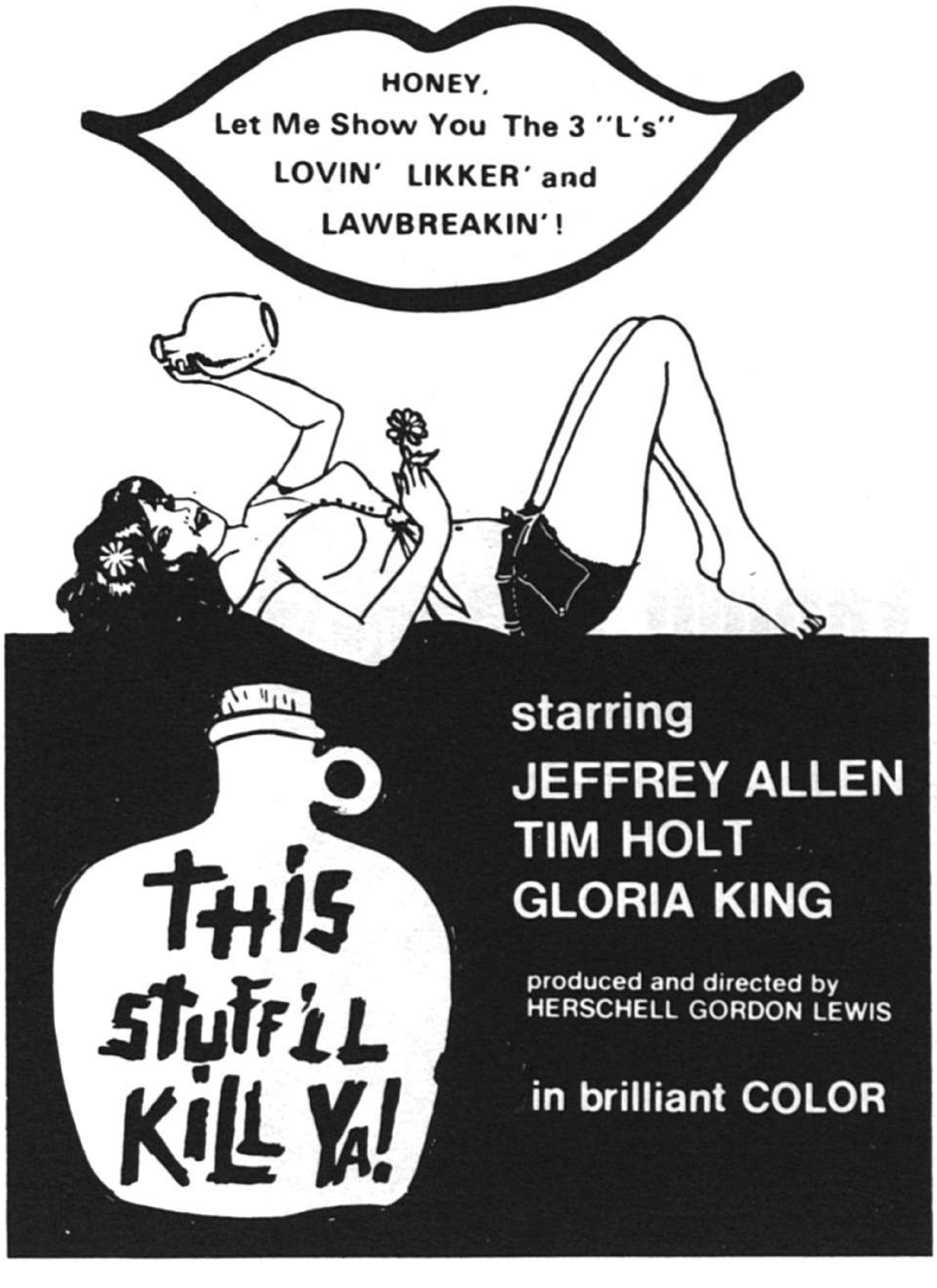
The pivotal character of the film, one Roscoe Boone by name, runs a holy-

1

roller country church which he uses as a cover for his moonshine ring. Boone can quote the Bible from cover to cover and often uses its teachings to justify his production of illegal alcohol as well as his other immoral pursuits. These include his "Isaiah Weddings" in which any male member of the church is allowed to partake of the bride. Boone's gang, which is made up of Sam, Turnip, Grady, and Boone's paramour, Elsie, also engages in a good natured running battle with the local federal authorities as well as the local liquor stores.

When Turnip is killed in the fiery crash of his moonshine-laden car following a high-speed police chase, Boone offers the driver's job to Carter, Turnip's son. Needing money for college, Carter accepts the position though his fiancée, Lynn, protests. Driving the hottest car owned by the group, he soon becomes a very successful moonshine runner.

Two federal agents, Clark (Tim Holt)



starring
**JEFFREY ALLEN**
**TIM HOLT**
**GLORIA KING**

produced and directed by
HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS

in brilliant COLOR

1 **Preacher Roscoe Boone (Jeffrey Allen) flies into a bible-thumping rage at the local liquor store that's stocking legal White Lightnin' in an effort to drive his illegal moonshine gang out of business. From *This Stuff'll Kill Ya! (1971).***

2 **Revenue agent Clark (Tim Holt, center) and his fellow agent are forced to drink moonshine by Preacher Boone's gang until they're smashed. Then they are photographed in compromising positions with two beauties from the Church of Heavenly Spirits. The purpose: blackmail.**

3 **The death stare of the stoning victim. From a frame enlargement.**

2

3

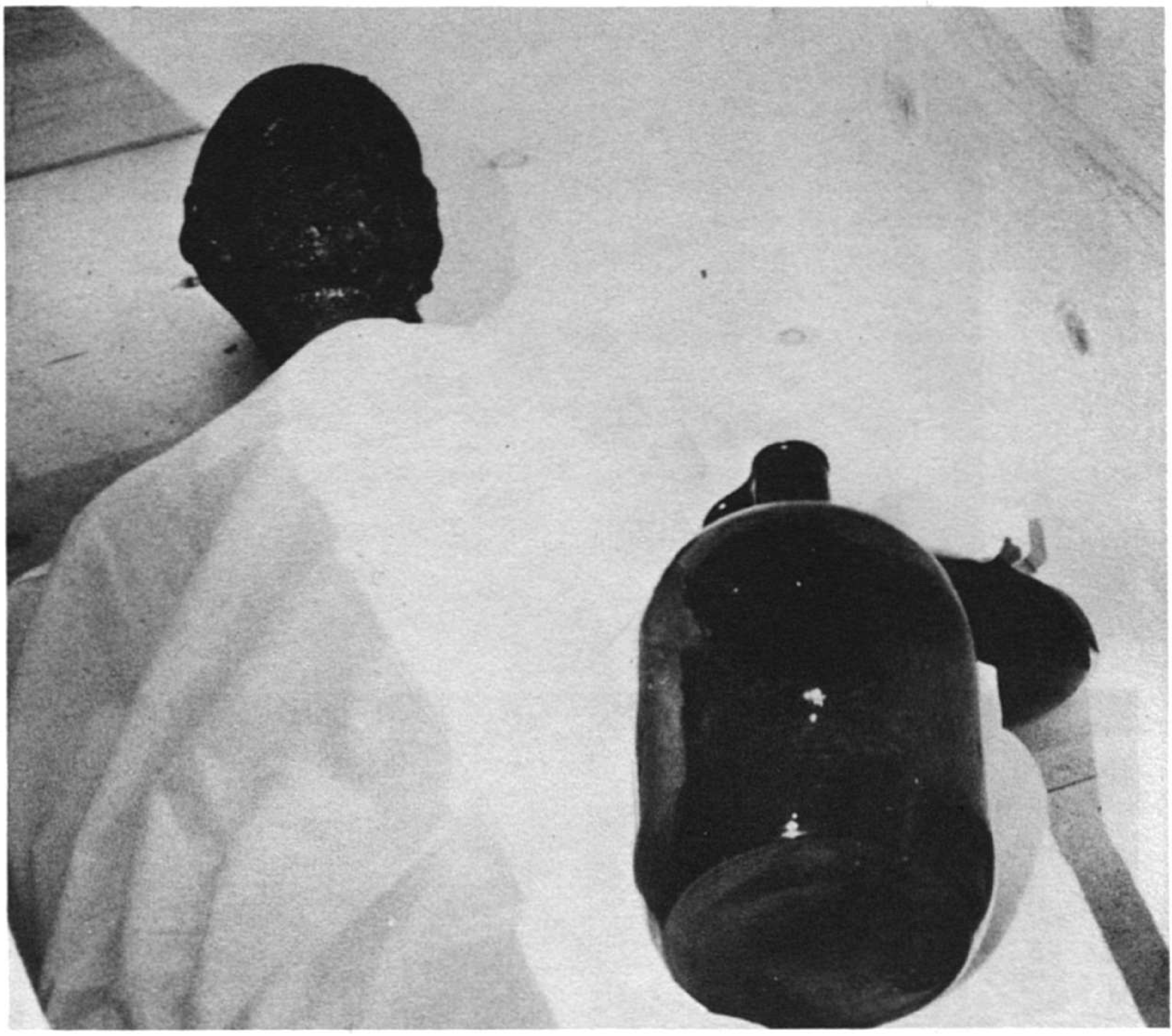
and Marshall, attempt to arrest Boone and the gang. Boone claims his liquor is merely cough syrup and forces the agents to drink it at gunpoint until they are both too smashed to walk. They are then photographed in compromising positions with two young women from the congregation. Boone then threatens them with blackmail if they fail to keep silent about the gang's activities.

A strange series of "biblical murders" then starts occurring. One young woman who complained about the treatment of the federal agents is summarily stoned to death. Later, two young female tourists who have accidentally stumbled upon the gang's activities are crucified in the churchyard. No one, not even Boone himself, knows who is committing the murders or why.

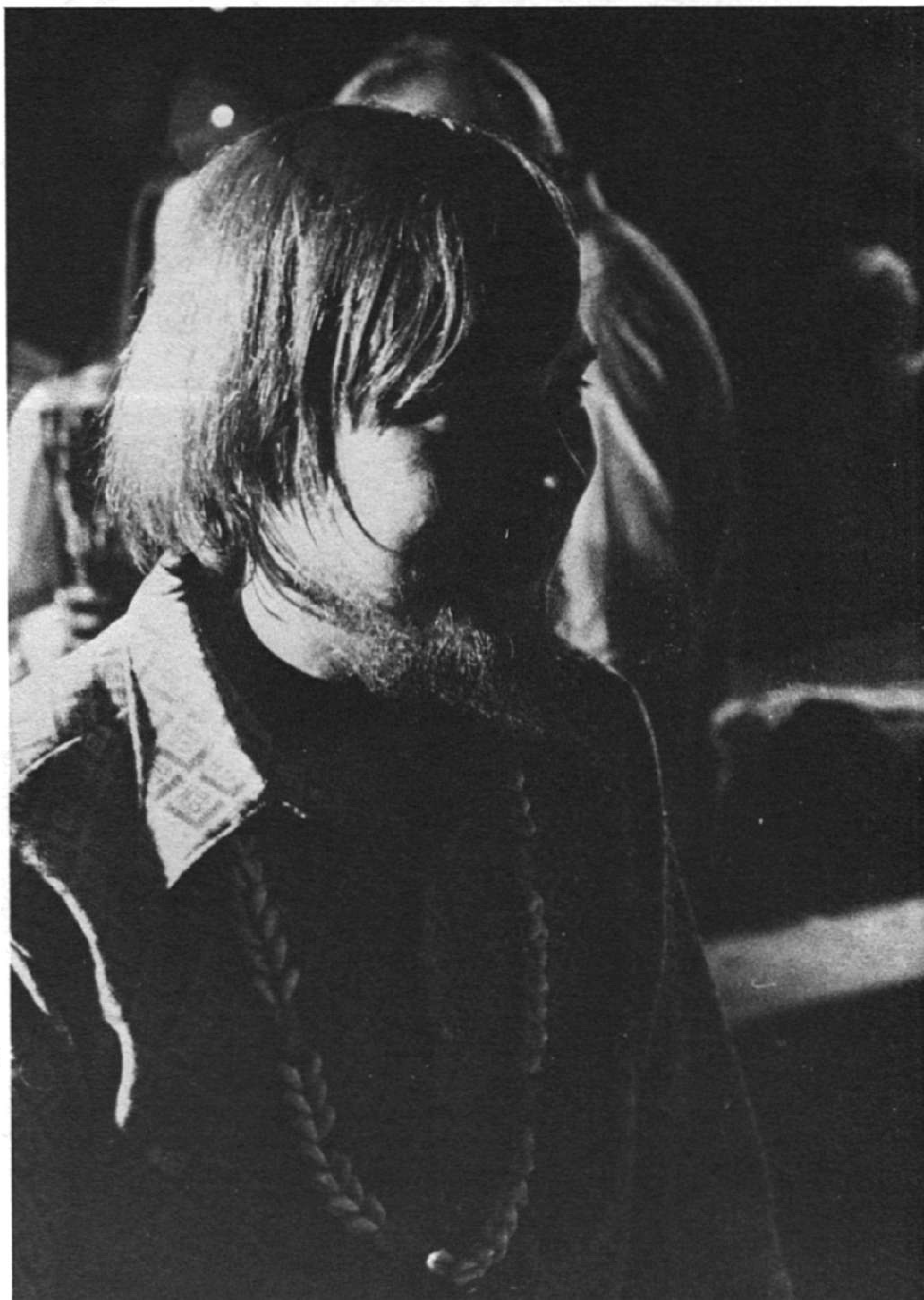
Federal agent Clark eventually defies Boone's blackmail threat and convinces the local liquor store to sell legal White Lightnin', an unaged liquor, for less

4 **The charred corpse of Turnip (John Garner) is buried in a pine box along with a jug of illegal moonshine.**

5 **The author converses with the millionaire's daughter during the shooting of the party sequence from *Year of the Yahoo* (1972) in the living room of her father's plush mansion. (If ever I wanted the power to make a woman fall instantly in love with me, this was it!)**



4



than Boone's moonshine, thus driving him out of business. Boone flies into a rage, but Carter cools him down, proposing that Sam and another gang member named Bubba sue the liquor store, saying that its White Lightnin' had made them sick. Agreeing, Boone sends Sam and Bubba off to bed to feign illness.

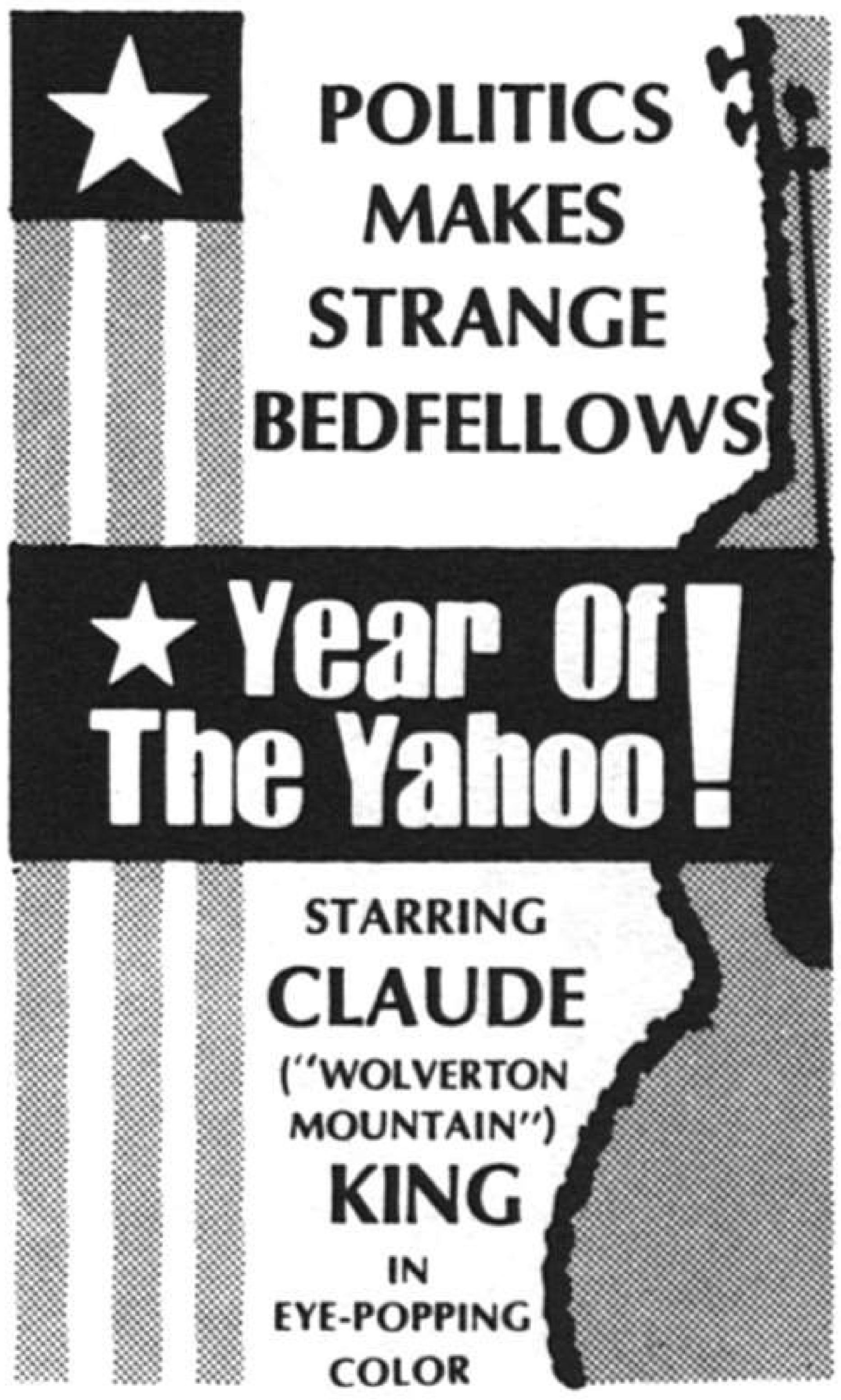
Carter is reunited with Lynn when he agrees to leave the gang. On his way to inform Boone of his decision, Carter chances upon Sam, up and around, and then Bubba cavorting with his nurse in the woods. He warns them both that if Clark or the Sheriff spot them, the plan will be blown and they'll be arrested. But they ignore him. Clark does indeed discover Sam and Bubba's fraud and jails them both.

Before Boone can be subjected to a similar fate, Carter manages to convince Clark to drop the charges. In return, he says, the still will be shut down and the negatives of the blackmail photos returned to the agents. But before this can

6

**6 Young lovers Lynn and Carter (Ronna Riddle and Terence McCarthy) come upon Bubba and his nurse (Larry Drake and Carol Merrell) while taking a walk in the woods.**

5


POLITICS
MAKES
STRANGE
BEDFELLOWS
★ Year Of The Yahoo!
STARRING
CLAUDE
("WOLVERTON MOUNTAIN")
KING
IN
EYE-POPPING
COLOR

happen, Grady goes berserk and admits to having committed the murders in a misguided effort to protect Boone and the gang. When he levels his shotgun at Carter, Boone, horrified, grabs it and the two men grapple for control of the weapon. During the struggle, the gun goes off, and so does Grady's head. The gang, shaken by the experience, joins with Boone as he prays for Grady's miserable soul.

When we reached Chakota, we checked into the only local motel for lodging. It had garish neon tubing running around the edges of its roof to call attention to it—as if that were really needed in the otherwise motel-less town. Each night we drove to the local Highway 69 drive-in theatre; there, after the last show, we would watch our silent rushes projected on the mammoth screen. Then, it was up early in the morning to head for the ranch and shoot exteriors.

Perhaps the most exciting and/or dan-

7 **The owners of a liquor store (left) are persuaded by federal agent Clark (Tim Holt, holding poster) to stock legal White Lightnin'.**

8 **The demonstration turns into a riot in *Year of the Yahoo!***

7

WHITE
LIGHTNIN
JUST LIKE GRANDPA USED TO MAKE
2 50
LEGAL
WHITE LIGHTNIN
THS
TSKY-10

8

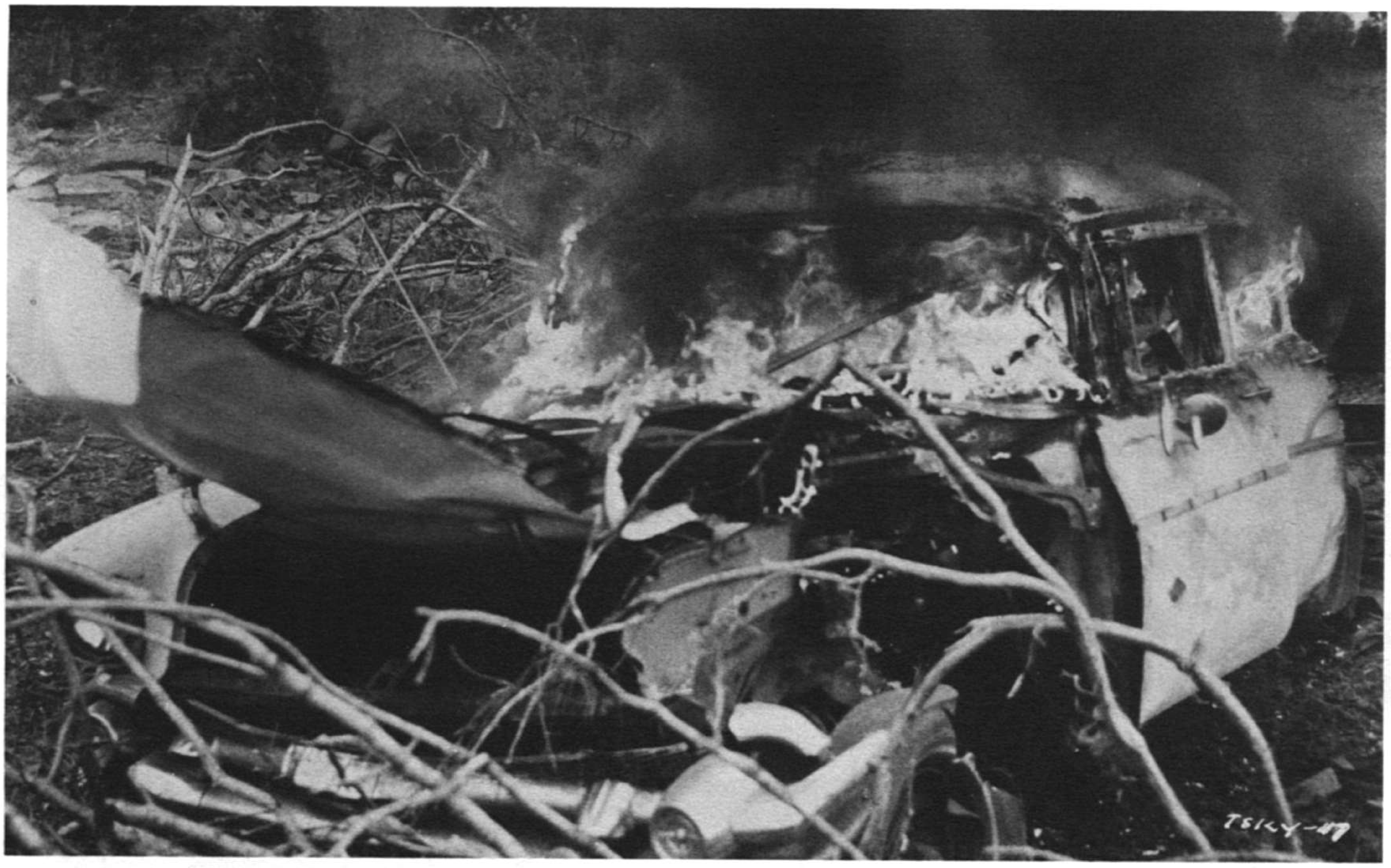
JACKSON
FOR SENATOR
He's One Of Us!
JE JACKSONS
OF US GUERRILAS
FREE
FOR
JACKSON

gerous exteriors we filmed involved the car chases. These were shot on a semi-private gravel road leading into the ranch which was at most a lane and a half wide. Its narrow width coupled with its many hills made driving on it at high speeds quite hazardous, for there was seldom any way of knowing if another car was coming the other way.

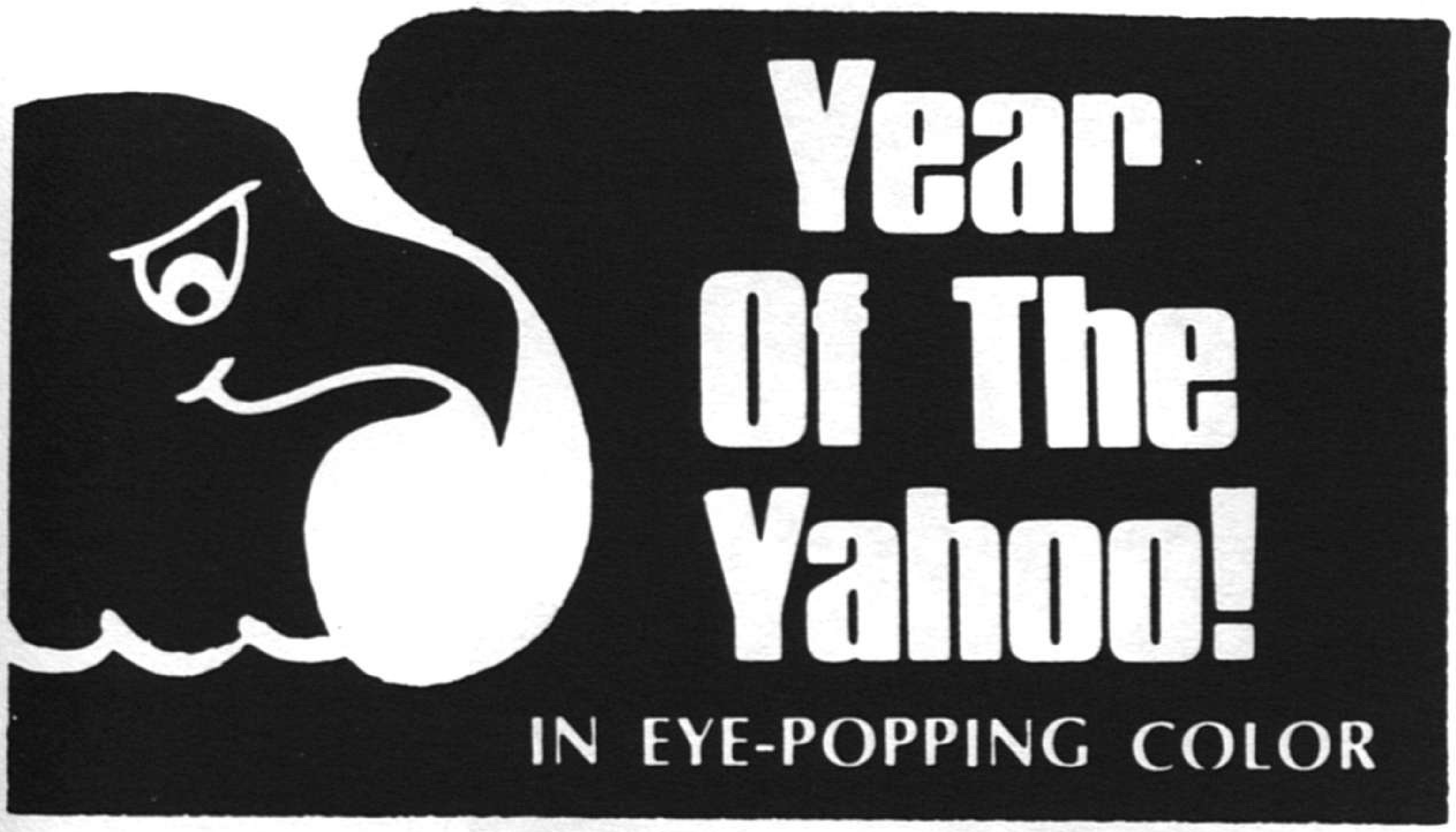
For these scenes we secured the complete cooperation of the local authorities, who provided us with a police squad car for our use. Herschell inevitably said that he always used real police in his pictures whenever possible because they worked much cheaper than actors. They also helped provide us with a car that would eventually be run off the road and blown up with dynamite.

Originally we had an old clunker for this scene. We'd towed it all the way from Oklahoma City. But when it came time for it to perform on camera, it died. The Chakota police had jailed a local citizen

9



9 **Turnip's moonshine-laden car crashes, explodes and burns.**



for exposing himself in public, so they prevailed upon him to sell us his car in order to help raise his bond. He agreed, and we proceeded to shoot the exteriors of the car chase out of the rear doors of a moving truck. When it came time to shoot the interiors of Turnip at the wheel, however, the new car's brakes froze and it refused to move. This problem did not deter Herschell, who quickly ordered, "Cut the brake lines!" Then he climbed into the car with the Arriflex. I followed with the camera battery. And we proceeded to speed up and down the hilly, treacherously narrow road without any brakes until we finally got the shots we needed. Now came the time for the car demolition scene.

Our host at the ranch, as well as some of his buddies, had eagerly agreed to supply the dynamite for blowing up the car. As we started preparing the scene, they in turn started to act like kids with fire crackers on the Fourth of July. They

11

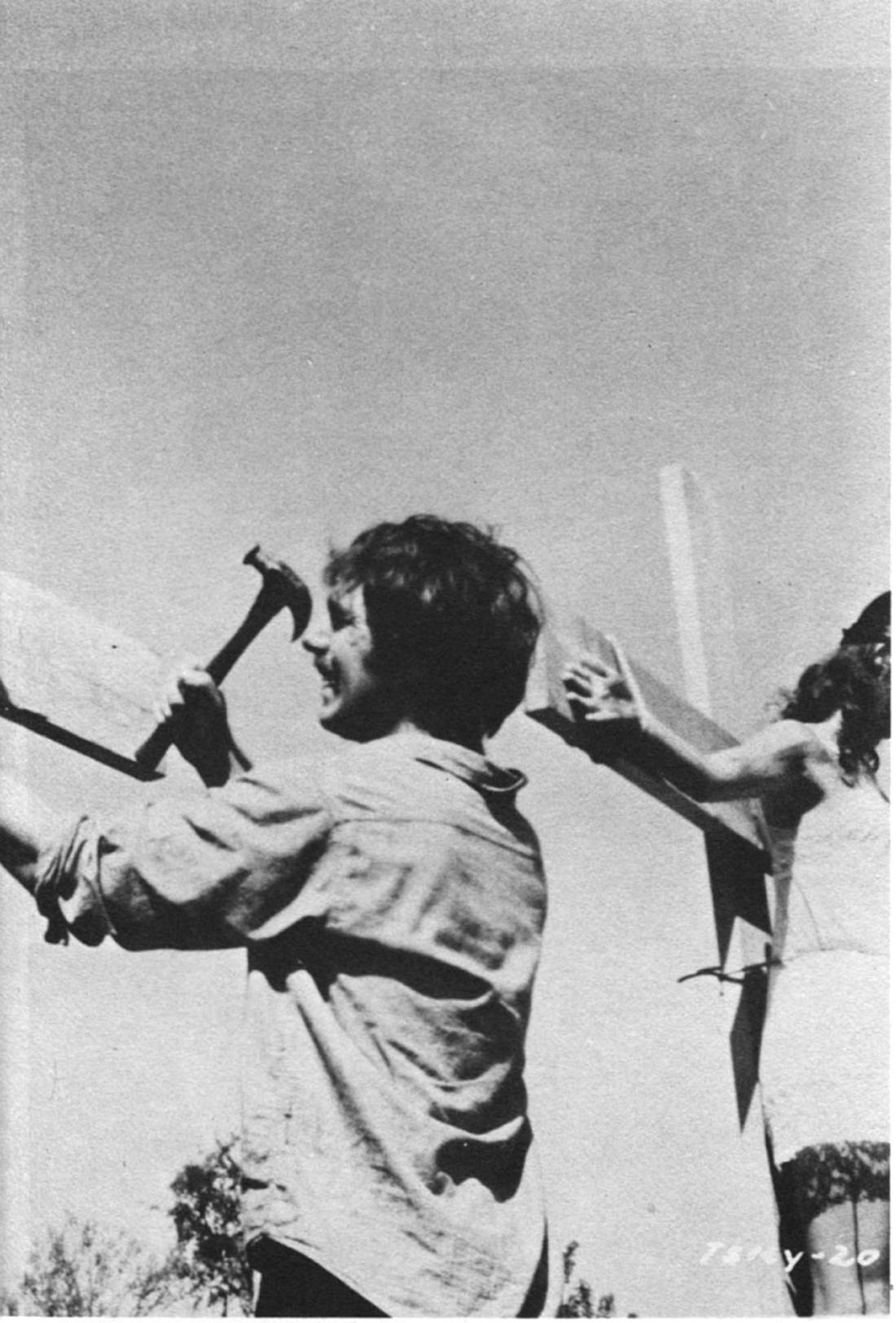
**10** **Two vacationing college girls, lost in the southern backwoods, are confronted by Preacher Boone and his congregation.**

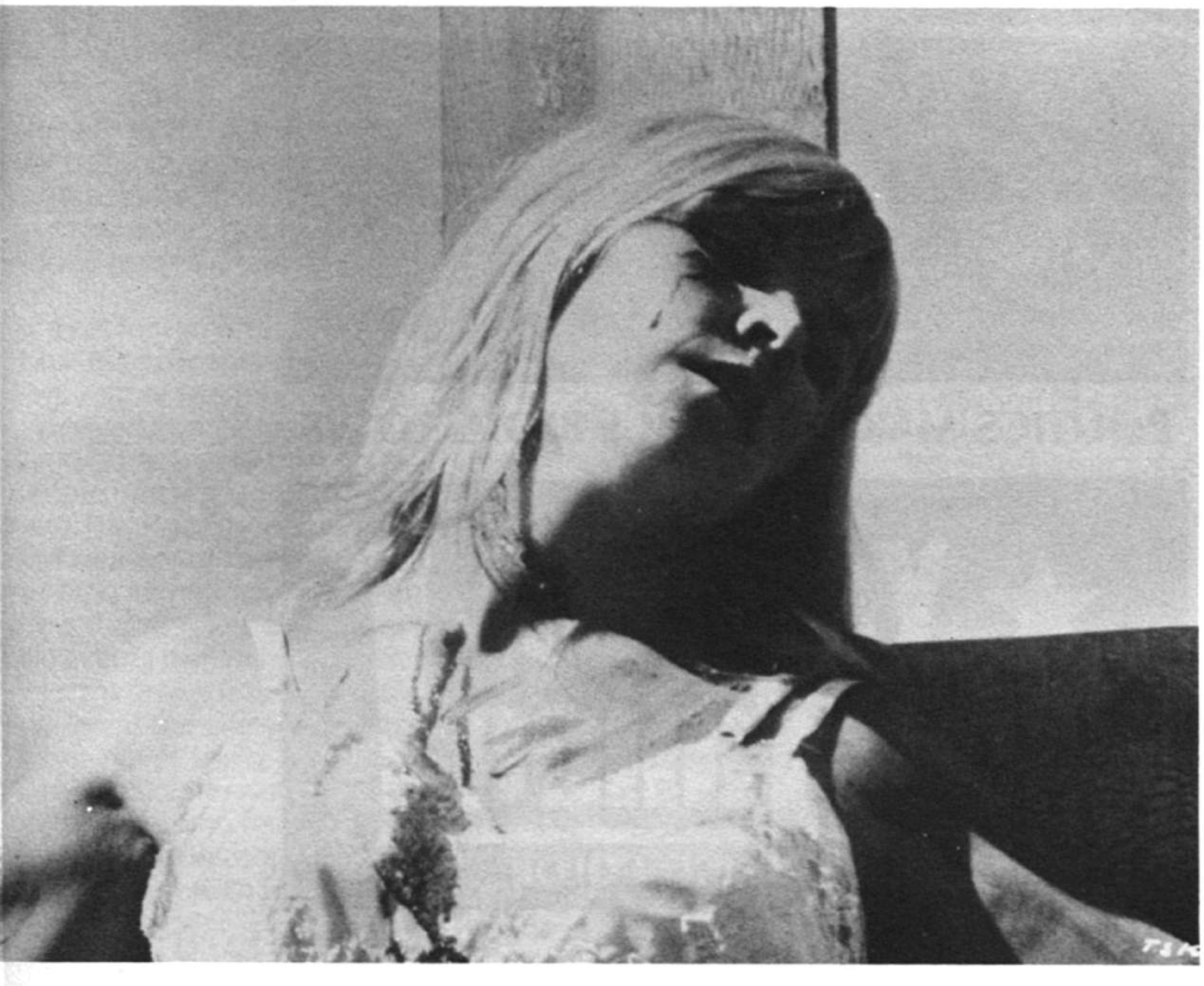
**11** **The demented Grady (Ray Sager) gives these two vacationing college girls a little help with their nails. Actually this still is only a publicity shot. Only the aftermath of the crucifixion appears in the finished picture.**

10

12

just couldn't wait for the "big boom." Finally, it was time to blow up the car. The dynamite was buried in a gully, the seats of the car were soaked with white gas, and the car was pushed down an incline toward the spot of its intended explosion. The Mitchell, the Arriflex, the Eymo were all grinding away. The car ended up in exactly the right place, but at the last moment, the dynamite failed to detonate. Well, the car wasn't about to come out of the gully as easily as it had gone in, so Herschell decided to pick up the scene from another angle at this same spot, blow the car, and fix the scene through cutting. We checked the wires that ran to the blasting cap and finding nothing wrong, tried again. I was stationed about fifty yards away, standing atop Bill Mays' motor home with the Mitchell on its tripod. When the car blew on cue this time, large chunks of the hood and trunk door sailed a hundred feet or so in the air and landed incredible





12 **One of the crucified college girls.**

13 **The other crucified college girl.**

distances from the site of the explosion. No one expected the blast to be that powerful, especially me. Luckily, fate was with us and no one was injured.

The gore scenes from *This Stuff'll Kill Ya!*—which was not strictly speaking a gore film—were also shot at the ranch. The stoning scene was done using roughly cut pieces of styrofoam that were painted to look like rocks. These were then dipped in stage blood so that blood would appear on the victim as the stones struck her. We shot the scene at night to help augment the illusion, and it looked surprisingly real.

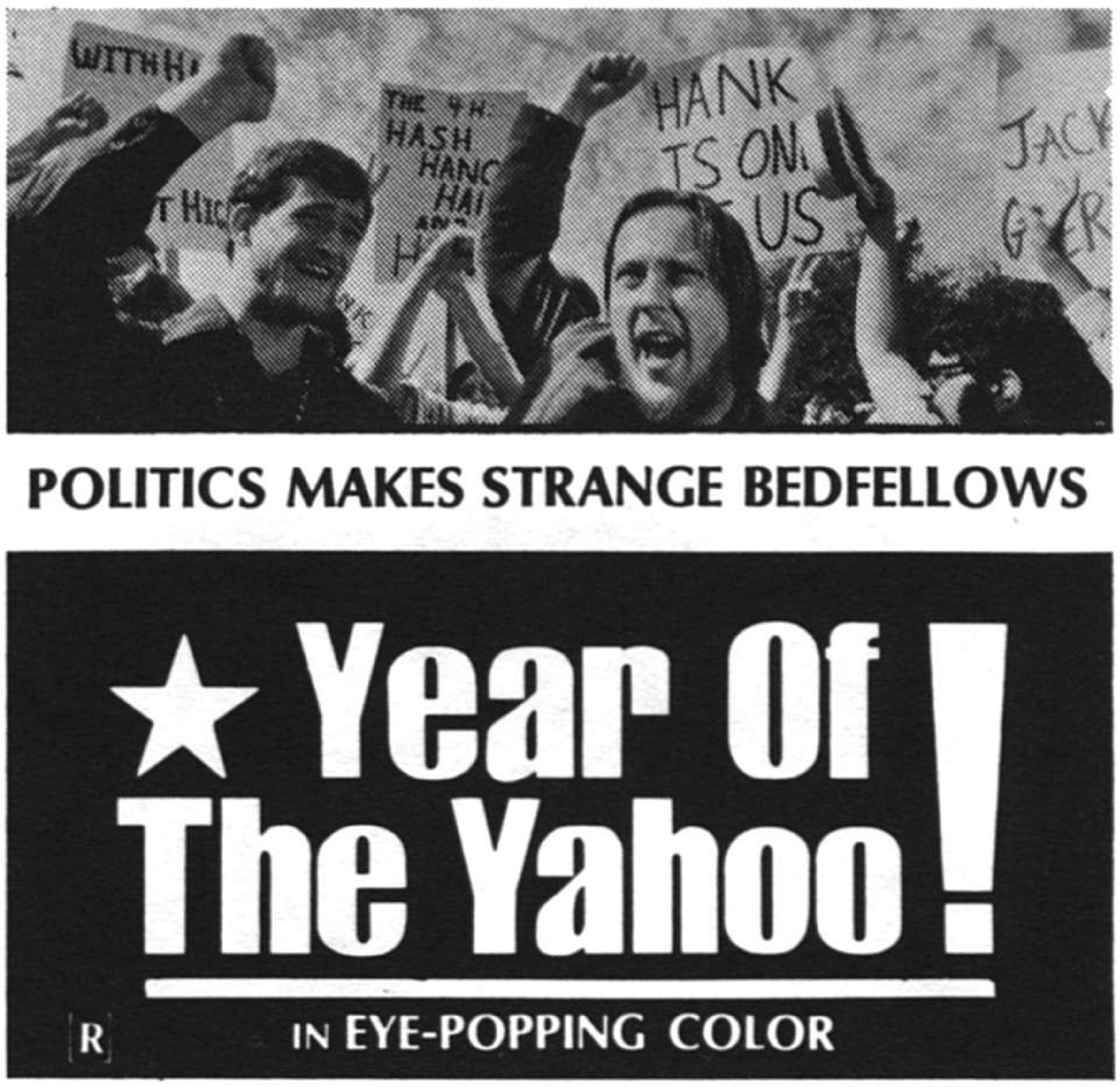
The crucifixion effect was a relatively easy one to pull off since the deed takes place off-screen; only its aftermath is shown. Wooden crosses were erected and rigged with small foot platforms for the girls to stand on; their arms were then tied to the crossbeams. Large nails were cut in half, affixed to the girls palms and feet with mortician's wax, and then

gored up with stage blood.

A third gore effect, the blowing off of Grady's head by shotgun, didn't come off as well as we'd hoped. We rigged a styrofoam head with a life mask and wig, then inserted prophylactics full of stage blood and a blasting cap into it. Unfortunately, the blasting cap proved too powerful. Even with our cameras overcranking to produce slow motion, the explosion still happened too fast to be truly effective. We later fixed the shot in the editing room with some quick cuts and the laying in of an effective shotgun blast sound effect.

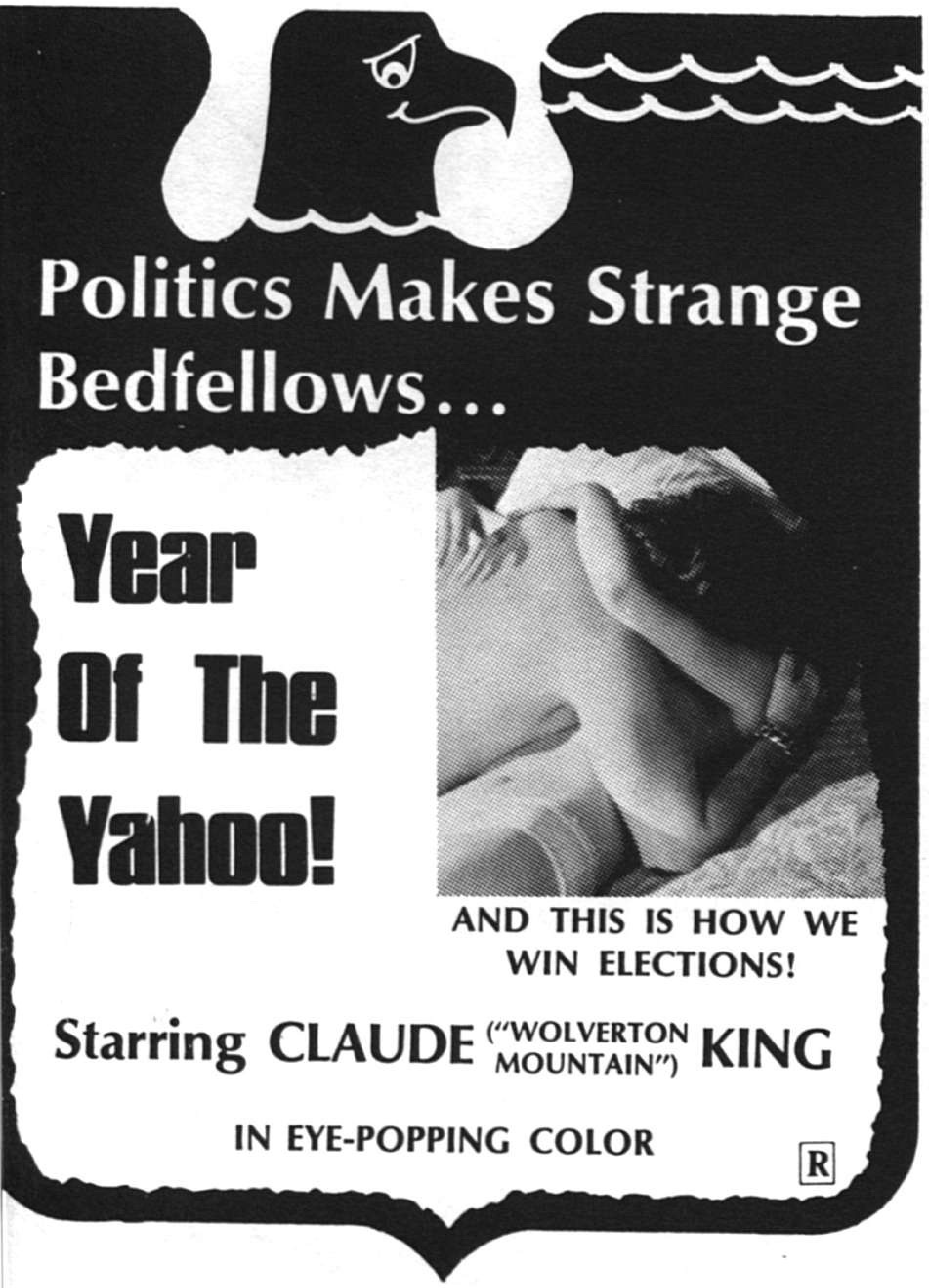
Any effect employing explosives can be extremely dangerous, no matter how many precautions are taken. I was shooting the exploding head sequence with the Cineflex from at least a dozen feet away, yet a flying piece of styrofoam still hit me in the forehead with enough force to really sting.

After finishing the exteriors on schedule, we returned to our home base in


POLITICS MAKES STRANGE BEDFELLOWS
★ Year Of The Yahoo!
R
IN EYE-POPPING COLOR

14 **"Ole Pro-verbs say: 'Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice.' And, Lord, if that ain't the most burnt sacrifice you ever seen, it sure comes close!" intones Boone during Turnip's burial ceremony.**

15 **Shooting for a mock political commercial on location in San Antonio for *Year of the Yahoo!* Left to right: the author (back to camera), Ray Sager, Bill Mays and HGL.**



Politics Makes Strange Bedfellows...

Year Of The Yahoo!

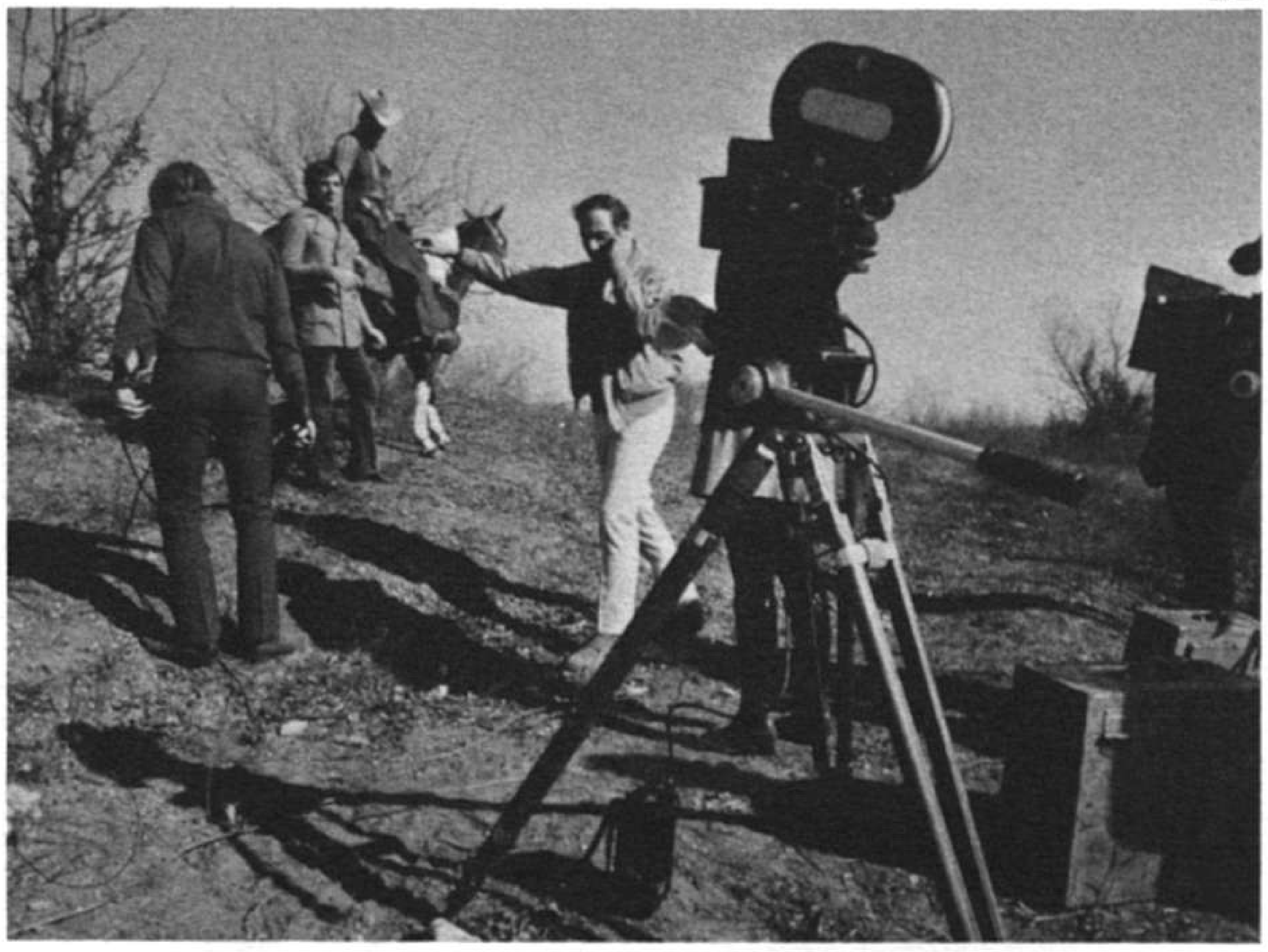
AND THIS IS HOW WE WIN ELECTIONS!

Starring CLAUDE ("WOLVERTON MOUNTAIN") KING

IN EYE-POPPING COLOR

R

15



Chicago with yet another feature under our belts. Over the years, some crew members had come and gone; those that had remained, however, had now become a solid team that worked together like a well-oiled machine. The stage was therefore set for Herschell to produce what I think is his best and most ambitious film, *Year of the Yahoo* (1972).

Derived from Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, the title of the film refers to the simple homespun qualities of the film's hero, Hank Jackson, a popular country and western singer, who is duped into running for political office. At the same time, it also refers to the film's villains, a trio of cold media manipulators who determine to shape Jackson's image. They represent the vilest characters in Swift's satiric novel: the Yahoos.

The basic premise of the screenplay by Allen Kahn, who had cut his scriptwriting teeth on *The Wizard of Gore*, is as relevant today—what with Ronald Reagan, a former actor, now occupying the White House—as it was ten years ago when we shot it. *Year of the Yahoo* was also filmed on a three-week shooting schedule and was made on locations in and around San Antonio, Texas.

Hank Jackson is portrayed by real life country and western singer Claude King, who is best known for his hits *Wolverton Mountain* and *Tiger Woman*. Ronna Riddle, the ingenue from *This Stuff'll Kill Ya!*, was imported from Oklahoma City to play Jackson's fiancée, Tammy Parker. Lewis regular Ray Sager created one of his sleaziest characterizations yet as Sid Angelo, the leader of the hot shot media team.

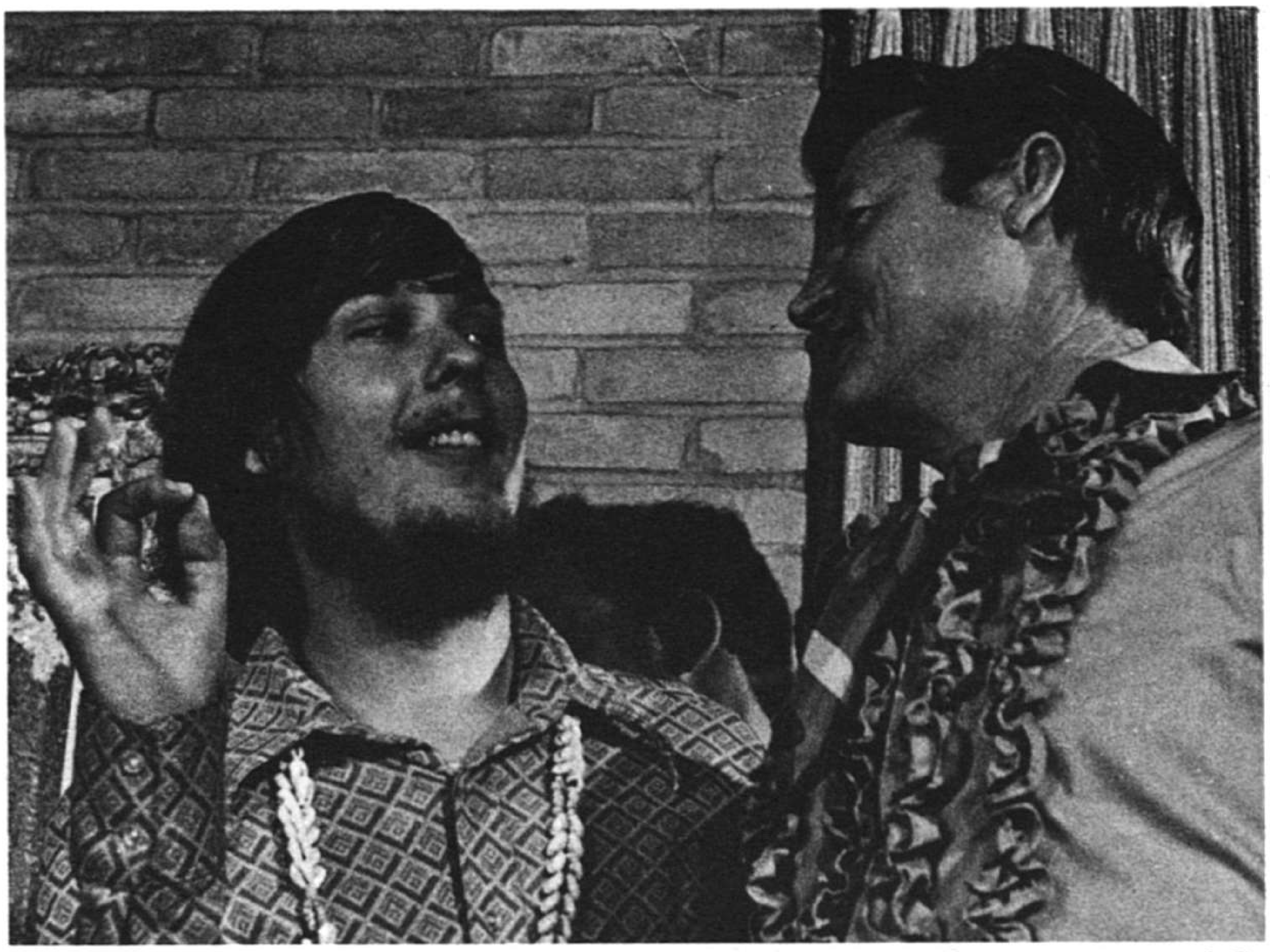
Like many of Lewis' films, *Year of the Yahoo* bears no credit for art direction. This is because the role of art director or production designer on his films was most often assumed by the locations themselves. I believe that much of the power of Lewis' work derives from the documentary-like reality of his carefully chosen settings and locations. And this is especially true of *Year of the Yahoo*.

During the production, we shot in a real hospital, the studios of San Antonio's public television station, the sumptuous offices of various oil company executives and in the lavish homes of same. One millionaire's estate that we used as a location had deer and peacocks roaming its grounds. The millionaire's mansion offered us a living room large enough to contain an entire tennis court; its walls were adorned by original paintings by Renoir, Matisse, and Monet. We used this elegant living room to shoot a party scene.

It was in this setting that Herschell did something which I believe speaks very well for his sense of professionalism and integrity to those who back him. To the millionaire, a lonely man despite his wealth, we were the most exciting thing to come his way in quite some time.

16 **Steve (the author) mimes the smoking of a joint to the amusement of his friend Hank Jackson (Claude King), a country and western singer running for political office in Lewis' *Year of the Yahoo!* (1972).**

17 **"What do I got to do to git a mink?" asks Elsie (Gloria King). "Same thing a mink got to do to git a mink," quips Roscoe Boone lecherously.**



16

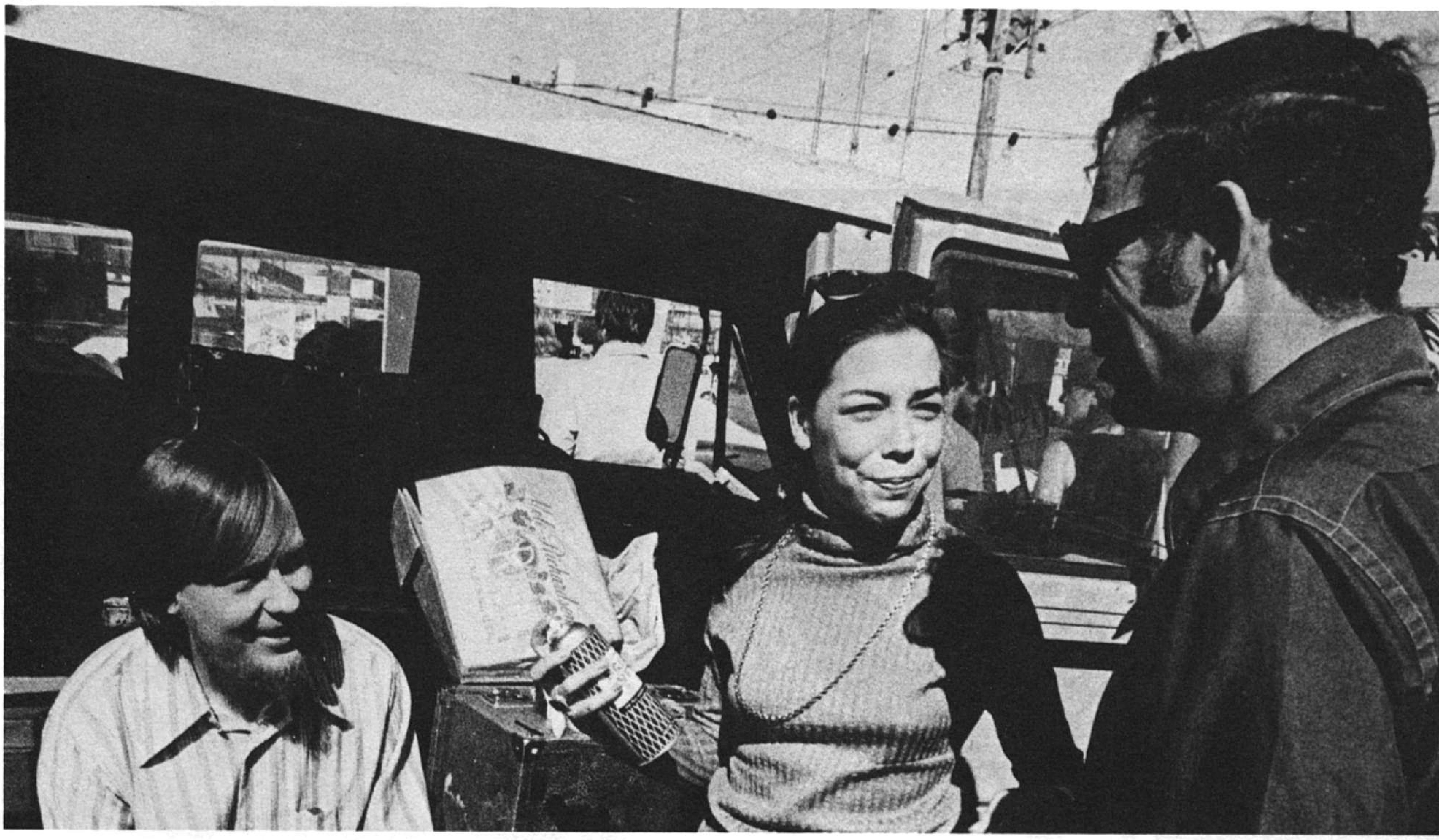
17

He asked Herschell if he would like to come back once a year to make a film there, implying that he, the millionaire, would supply the money even if he never got a single return on his investment. I would have jumped at the offer, but after some consideration, Herschell decided to decline it, explaining that he did not wish to produce pictures for their own sake, films that would wind up sitting around unshown in their film cans, gathering dust. He always sought to make sure that if nothing else his films would make money for their investors. That was his personal credo, and he always lived up to it.

Besides shooting in the homes of San Antonio's very rich, we also filmed in the homes of the very poor. We used many local Mexican-Americans in small roles or as extras on the picture. Many of them had been primed for our film by having appeared as extras a couple years earlier in the Peter Ustinov comedy *Viva Max!*

18 **Continuity person turned hair-dresser Susan Kresge preps me for an upcoming sequence as producer-director Lewis looks on during the production of *Year of the Yahoo!***

18



Once again, we were like the circus come to town. Everyone threw out the red carpet for us.

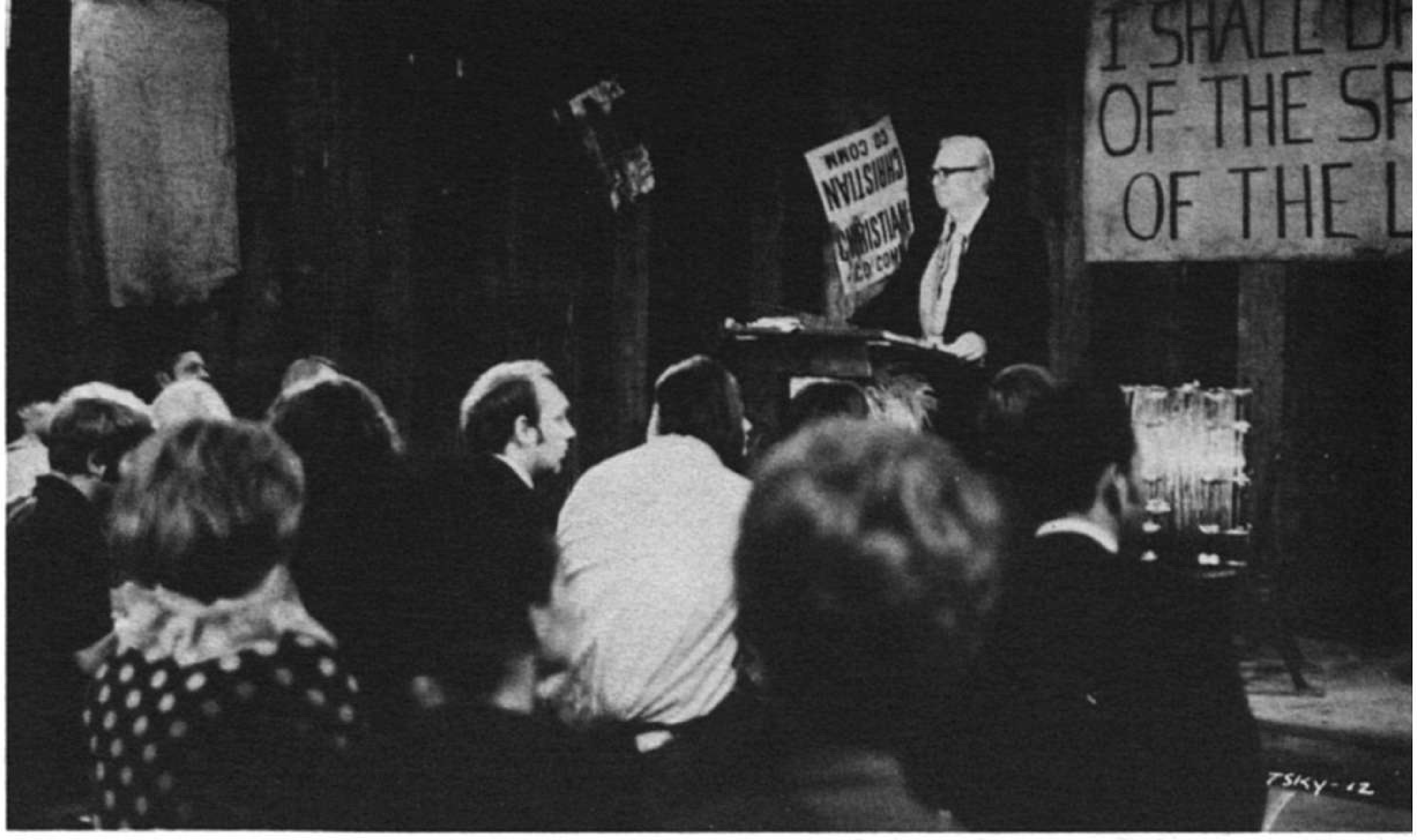
While shooting in the homes of these people, I saw firsthand the poverty they were forced to endure. In some homes, I was afraid to plug in more than 1500 watts of light for fear of blowing up the place. The contrasting physical reality of these settings of wealth and poverty lends real power to the *Year of the Yahoo's* story of political maneuvering and media manipulation.

The plot revolves around the efforts of Governor Baxter, the leader of the opposing party in an unnamed southwestern state, to unseat liberal senator Fred Burwell. For this purpose, Baxter eagerly accepts aid offered by the White House. It comes in the form of three slick media professionals: Sid Angelo, an expert in TV and film production; Ed Varnett, a media and advertising consultant; and Chet Stoner, an expert in statistics and political trending.

The candidate they select to oppose Burwell is Hank Jackson, a country and western singer with a high level of popularity among the silent majority. Angelo, Varnett, and Stoner launch a multimedia campaign for Jackson which preys on the fears of the average voter by using the poor and disadvantaged as scapegoats. Blinded by his own ambition, Jackson is easily persuaded to abandon his natural integrity and speak in favor of positions with which he does not really agree. Even his fiancee, Tammy Parker, cannot convince him of the error of his ways.

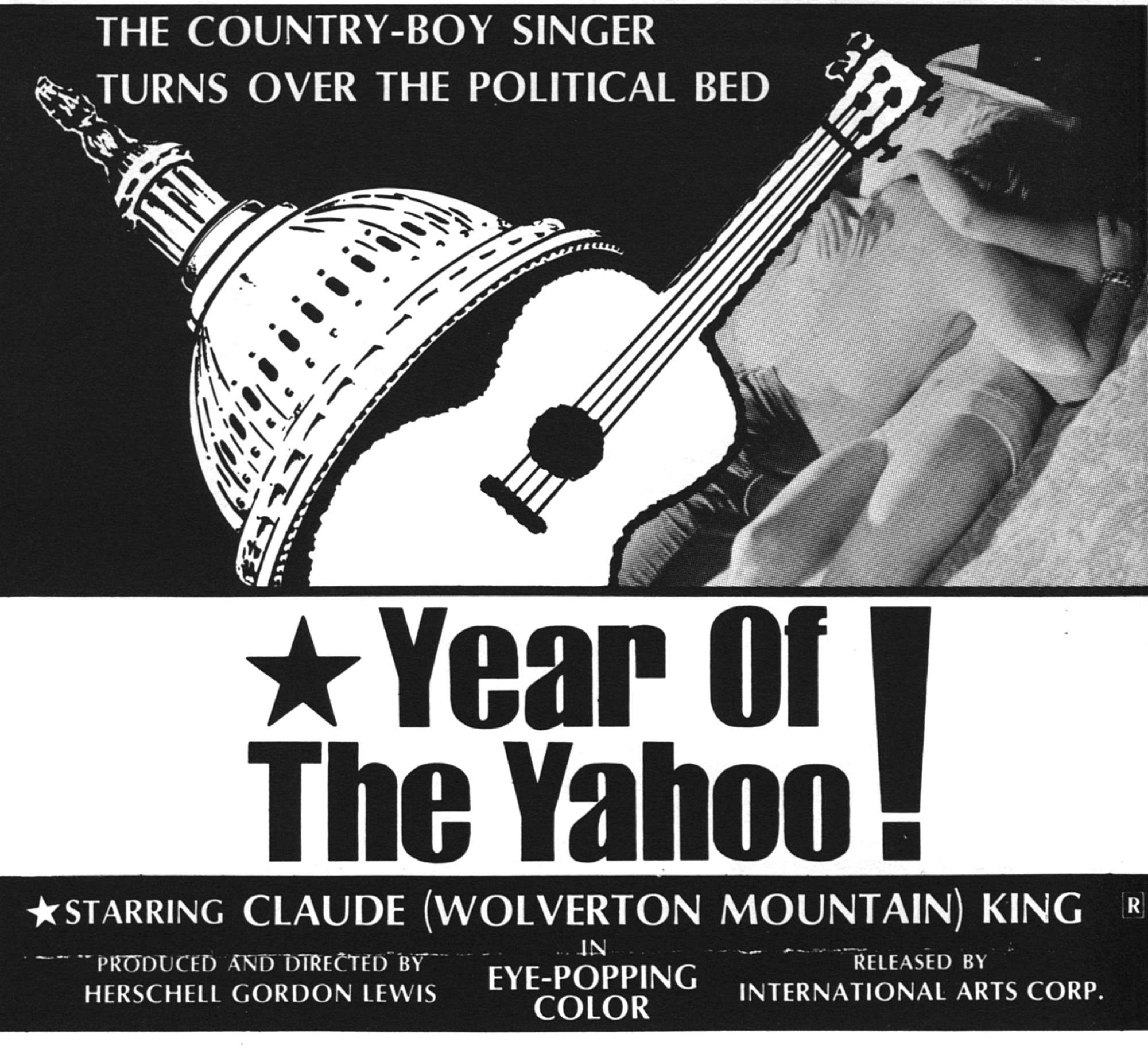
All during the campaign, Angelo and Company show little concern for the moral, ethical, or human consequences of the real life drama they are helping to orchestrate. Angelo proves himself to be the most cyncial and sleazy of the lot when he summarily fires an attractive young woman from his crew simply to end his affair with her. Still, Jackson continues to be Angelo's puppet, and soon the polls start showing that he has begun to take the lead over Burwell.

Then a crisis flares up centering around a local rent strike. Hank has been instructed by the media team to oppose the strike because Burwell is supporting it. No longer able to stomach Hank's mounting ego, his underhanded campaign, or his slimy brain trust, Tammy makes a public appearance with the strikers, endorsing their cause and Burwell's position on it. When she leaves the demonstration, she is attacked and raped by two goons who had been hired by Angelo to pretend to be strikers and disrupt the proceedings. Angelo is elated by this turn of events and convinces Hank to blame the demonstrators as a whole, thus polarizing public opinion against them. But after hearing the truth from Tammy, the enraged Jackson denounces Angelo and his cohorts and vows



19

19 **Preacher Roscoe Boone (Jeffrey Allen) addresses his odd and probably drunken congregation in Lewis' *This Stuff'll Kill Ya!* (1971). The Moonshine church interior, the film's only artificial set, was constructed in an abandoned UHF TV studio in Oklahoma City.**



THE COUNTRY-BOY SINGER
TURNS OVER THE POLITICAL BED

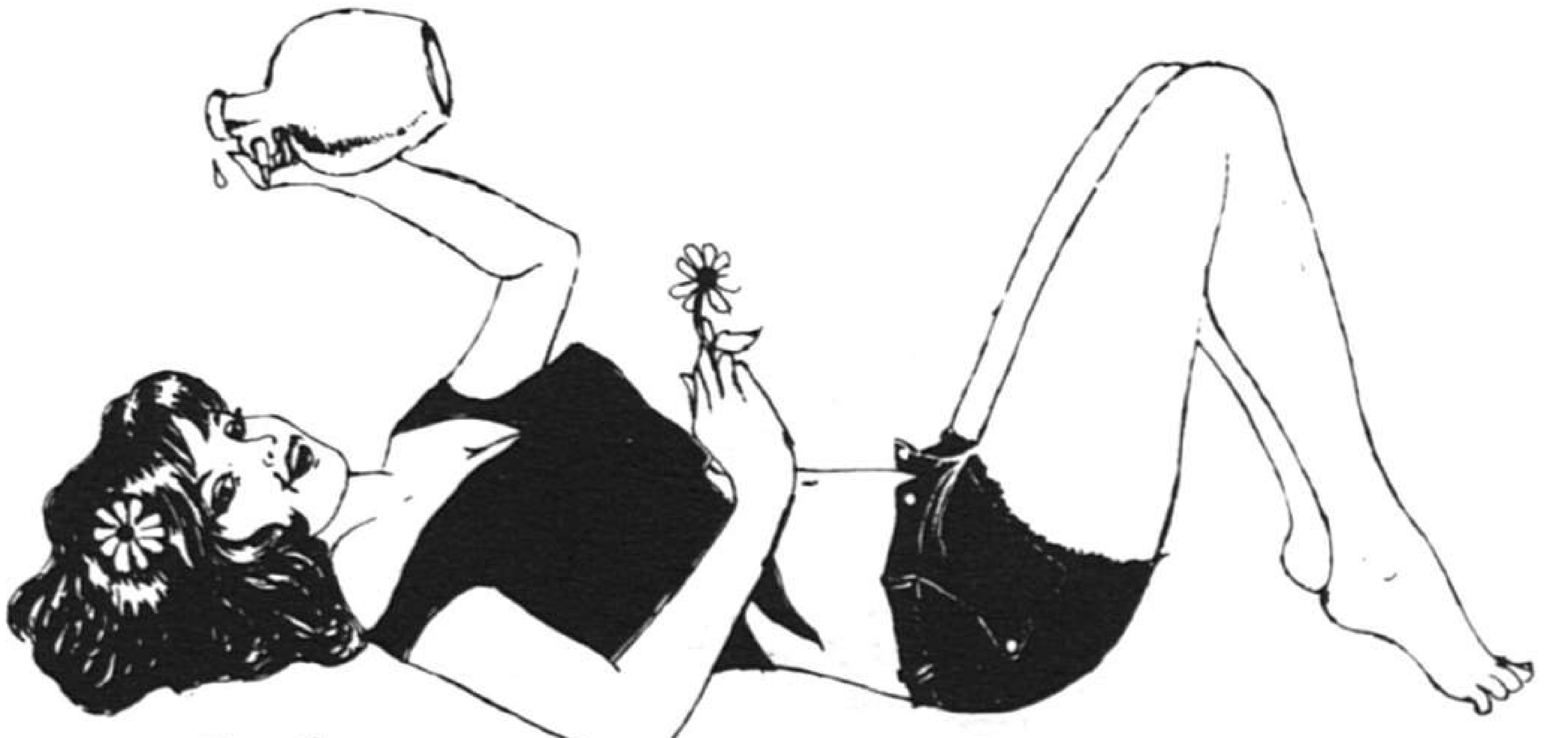
# ★ Year Of The Yahoo!

★STARRING CLAUDE (WOLVERTON MOUNTAIN) KING Ⓡ

IN
EYE-POPPING
COLOR

PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY
HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS

RELEASED BY
INTERNATIONAL ARTS CORP.



# Too Much Lovin'! Too Much Likker! Too Much Lawbreakin'!

## An Age-Old Business Moves Into The 1970's

to finish the campaign on his own.

Without the slick backing of his promoters, however, Hank proves himself to be a shallow candidate with little knowledge of the issues. Realizing that he is definitely not senatorial timber, Hank is almost relieved when he loses the election and is able to resume his musical career and his romance with Tammy. The two-faced Governor Baxter meanwhile publicly acclaims Jackson's defeat as a moral repudiation of "newfangled media politics." But Sid and his associates know it was just a statistical accident. They depart, still seeing themselves and their methods as the political wave of the future.

As I said before, I still think that the theme of *Year of the Yahoo!* is as relevant today as it was ten years ago, if not moreso. I also feel that the theme was excellently handled by Lewis and writer Allen Kahn within its exploitation film context. The fact that *Year of the Yahoo!* was an exploitation film also served to carry the theme to larger numbers of the filmgoing public than it might have reached otherwise. The film is full of action, humor, and toe-tapping country and western music; in fact, I was dancing behind the dolly myself a lot of the time. And yet it is also a film of ideas, an excellent example of how an exploitation film can still be used to present relevant issues.

When I first saw the finished print of *Year of the Yahoo!* at a Chicago drive-in, I was amazed by the level of technical quality we had attained in it. The film is on a par technically with most made-for-TV movies, and shows Herschell at the height of his powers as a filmmaker. It's a film that excites, entertains and provokes thought all at the same time.

# CHAPTER SIXTEEN

# Herschell Gordon Lewis today

**Herschell Gordon Lewis produced his last feature film, *The Gore-Gore Girls,* in 1972. In 1975, following a series of business misadventures and resulting personal and financial setbacks—none of them related to his film activities—he was forced to close the doors of his advertising agency in the Wrigley Building and open a smaller agency in Highland Park. He named it Communicomp. At the same time, he also went to work for the Bradford Galleries, the world's largest seller of commemorative china plates. That Herschell could switch so completely from selling the ghastly and bizarre to marketing the elegant and ornate is a bit ironic. Yet it speaks very well for his versatility and drive. In the face of his financial setbacks, he was able to land firmly on both feet. That too is characteristic of Herschell.**

Early in 1977, Lewis moved to Minneapolis and took a position with Calhoun's Collectors Society, Bradford's direct competitor in the commemorative plate field. He remained in Minneapolis until 1979 at which time he moved to Florida, where he now operates a direct mail advertising agency under his Communicomp banner.

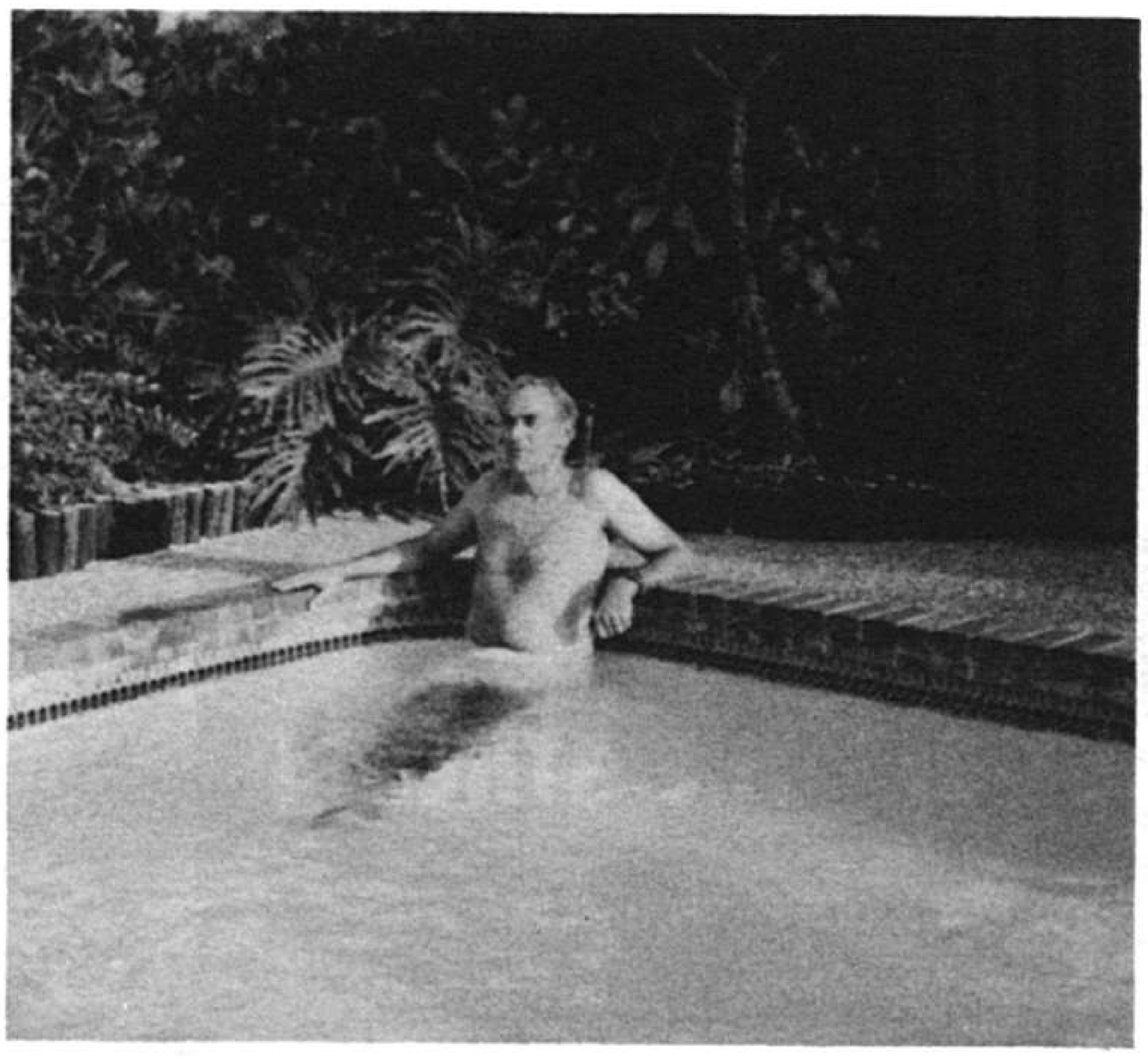
Herschell Gordon Lewis is a gentleman of great culture, intelligence, and wit. He never takes himself or his work too seriously. He is a man who can "eef" (a hillbilly form of yodeling) with the best of them, and he can play music on a saw with a violin bow—which is no mean feat.

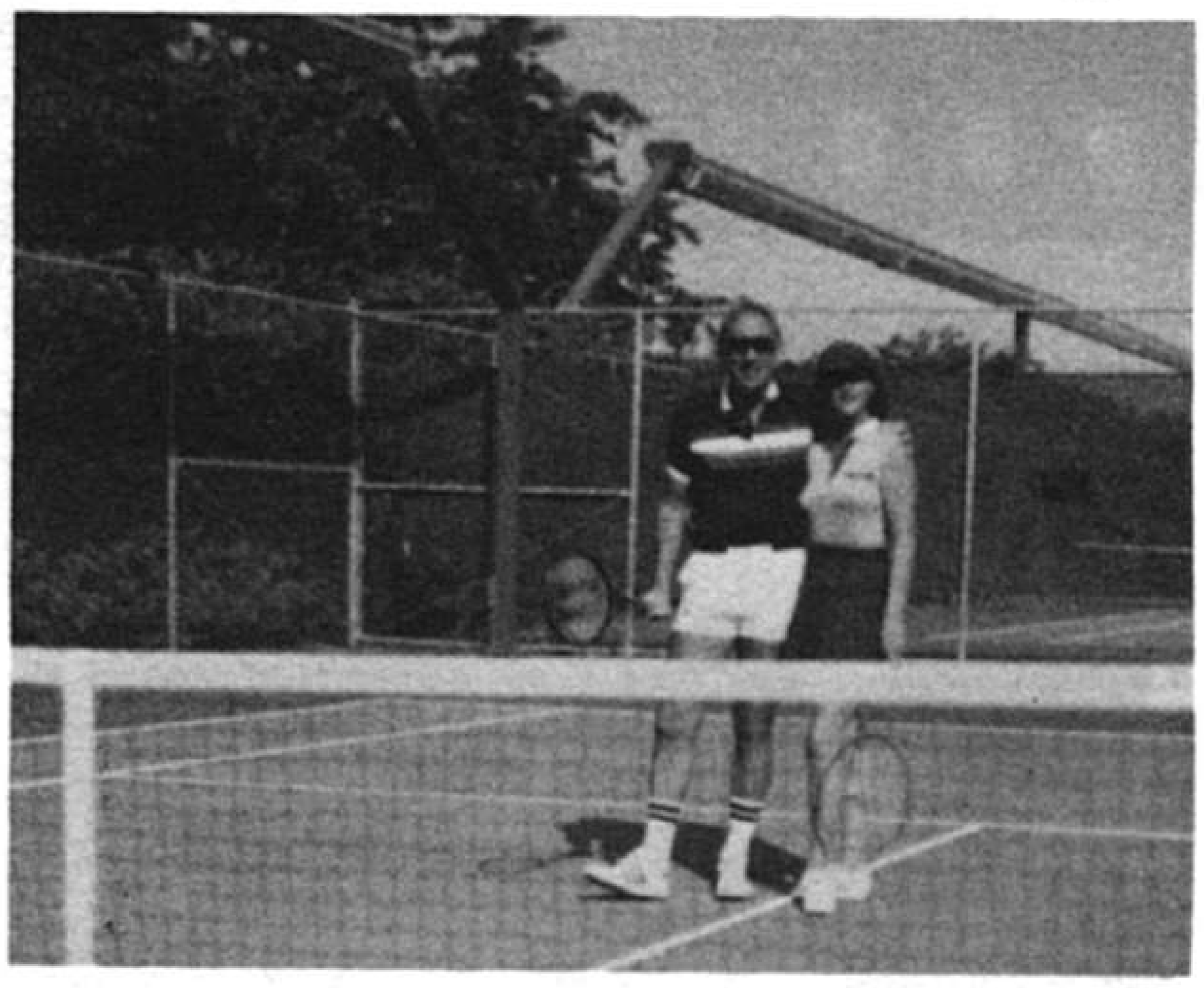
Herschell has never claimed—unlike most other producer-directors for whom I've worked—that his pictures are "art." Yet, in my opinion they are. For two reasons:

First, Lewis' pictures hold a mirror up to nature with their real settings, costumes, props—making them veritable documentaries of the eras in which they were made, the sixties and early seventies. I also believe that Lewis' films effectively chronicle the hopes, fears, morals, attitudes, fads, foibles, fashions, and taboos (most of which they managed to violate) of their times.

And second, Lewis was a filmmaker who "dared to think the unthinkable," knowing that it would be big box office. He then proceeded to offer the "unthinkable" to his audiences in the form of some of the most absurd, bizarre, sometimes horrendous, and totally off-the-wall plots and action sequences ever concocted, setting them firmly against an almost documentary-like backdrop. By doing this, Lewis created his very own brand of cinematic surrealism. He took the "normal" world and turned it totally upside-down—to the dismay *and* delight of audiences alike. There is no mistaking a Lewis film. Imagination abounds in his work alongside the sensationalism.

Questions of art aside, there can be no doubt that Lewis' films *do* enjoy a professional stature. As low-budget pictures


1


2

3

**1 Ah, this is definitely paradise!**

**2 The Wiz and his Mrs., Margo, relaxing together on the tennis court.**

**3 Herschell in his sporty Delorean.**

produced solely to turn a profit, they are in good company with all the other exploitation pictures, major studio B pictures of the thirties, forties and fifties, serials and silent slapstick comedies that have ever been made. And Lewis himself enjoys a professional stature because he never lost sight of his personal business credo: to stay on schedule and to always come in at or under budget. He was always concerned with the technical competence, if not excellence, of his productions. Being first and foremost a showman, he always sought to make sure that his audiences and his investors got at least their money's worth.

Herschell knew the extent of his talents and he also knew the level within the film business to which he could, within the limits of his resources, best aspire. His output also helped many small and independent theatre owners stay in business, many of whom simply could not afford Hollywood's high-priced product. There is an irony, I think, in the fact that while Lewis made exploitaton films because he had to in order to compete for theatre space with major studio films, today these same major studios are lavishing huge amounts of money on making the same kind of films Herschell once ground out for pennies. John Landis' *An American Werewolf in London* is little more than a very expensive exploitation film on the order of Lewis' own *The Wizard of Gore*. It cost around $10 million to make. Give Herschell $10 million to make a film and I'm sure he would come up with something a hell of a lot better. *Year of the Yahoo!*, I think, indicates one of the directions Herschell would really like to have gone had he been able to afford to.

Throughout his career, Herschell presided over an extended family of actors and technicians, a stock company, who worked for him a half a dozen times or more. This testifies to a certain amount allegiance and dedication fully earned by Lewis. It was always a pleasure to work on one of his productions. No one ever got rich working on a Lewis picture, but we all grew as filmmakers. It was hard work, but it was also a whole lot of fun, producing many good times which I'll remember always. I would gladly sign up with Herschell Lewis for any future project.

I don't know how likely a return by Lewis to the film business may be. He himself is ambivalent about whether he will ever resume film production. If he does, I'm sure it will not be on the same level as in the past. If someone were to offer him a tempting sum to produce a film on a higher level, who knows? He just might.

Today, Herschell Gordon Lewis lives in Florida—he always did covet sunshine. There he earns his living writing direct response mail order advertising campaigns. He is also the author of a recently published book on the American illustrator Norman Rockwell. He sits relaxing by his swimming pool, plays tennis and scuba dives to keep in shape, and feels that he has found paradise. I feel lucky that the writing of this book has resulted in the renewing of my friendship with him. I'm very fond of Herschell; whatever I know about the practicalities of filmmaking, he taught me.

And how does Herschell himself sum up his career in films? "Well, Dan, you just had to be there," he says. "We put more on film per dollar spent than anybody before or since."

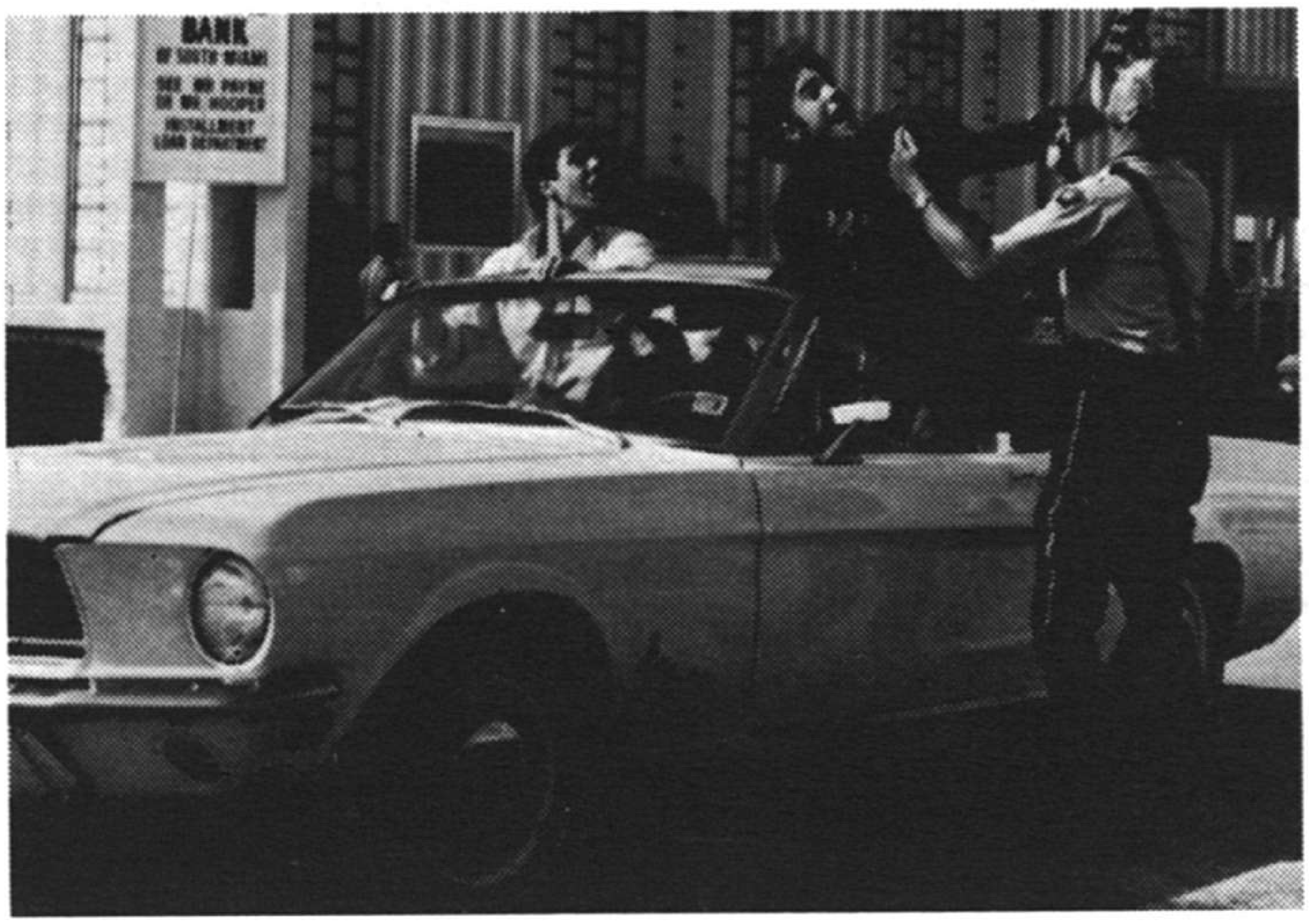
I, a firm believer in the value of "more from less," heartily concur.

**MOTHERS: Hide Your Daughters**
**POLICE: Don't Turn Your Backs**
**INNOCENTS: Watch If You Dare**

# Scenes from JUST FOR THE HELL OF IT

**GET OFF THE STREET!**

an ARGENT FILM PRODUCTIONS, INC. picture
released by UNUSUAL FILMS INTERNATIONAL

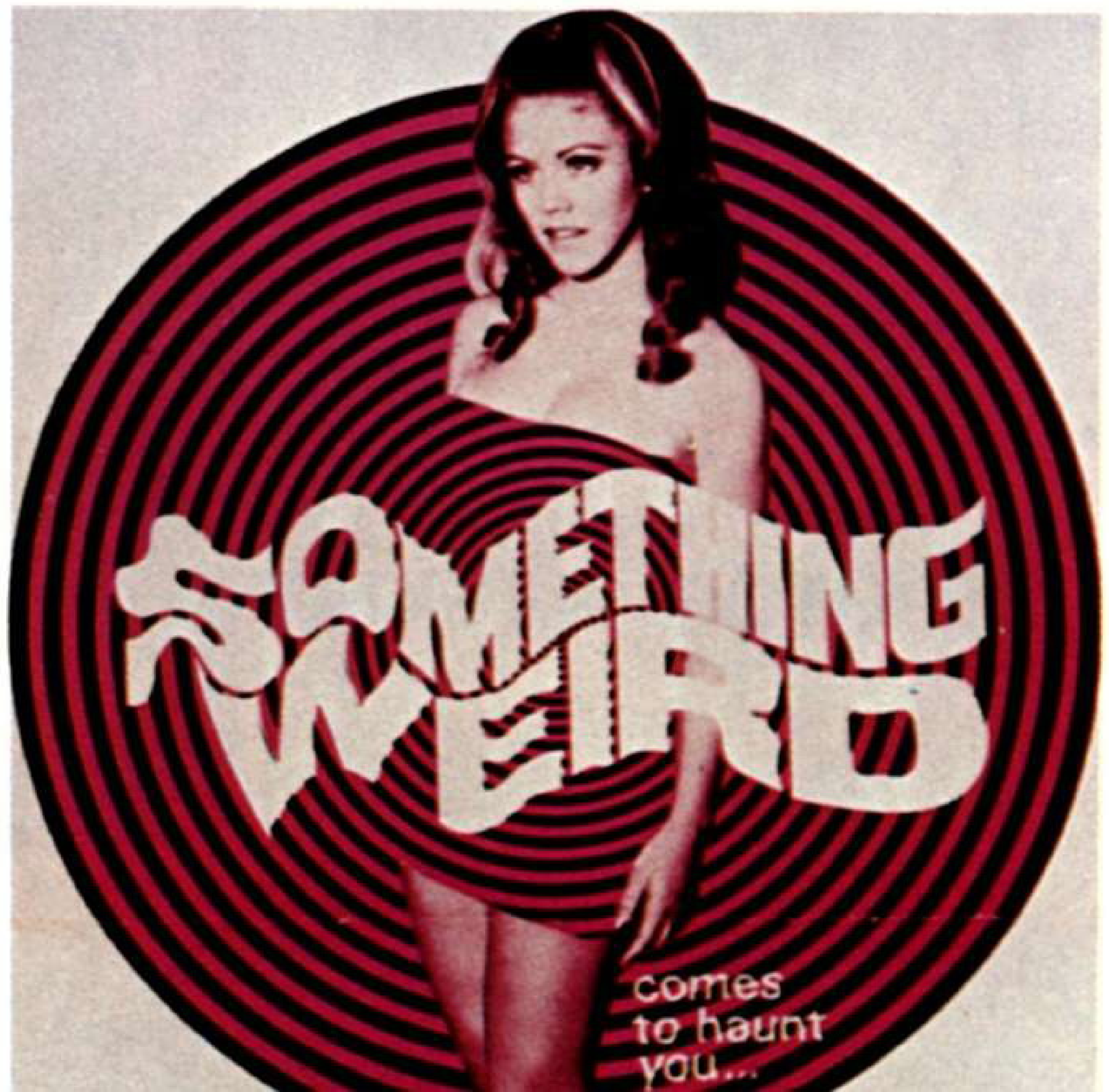


1

2

3

4



1 **The results of the steam pressing in *The Gore-Gore Girls.***

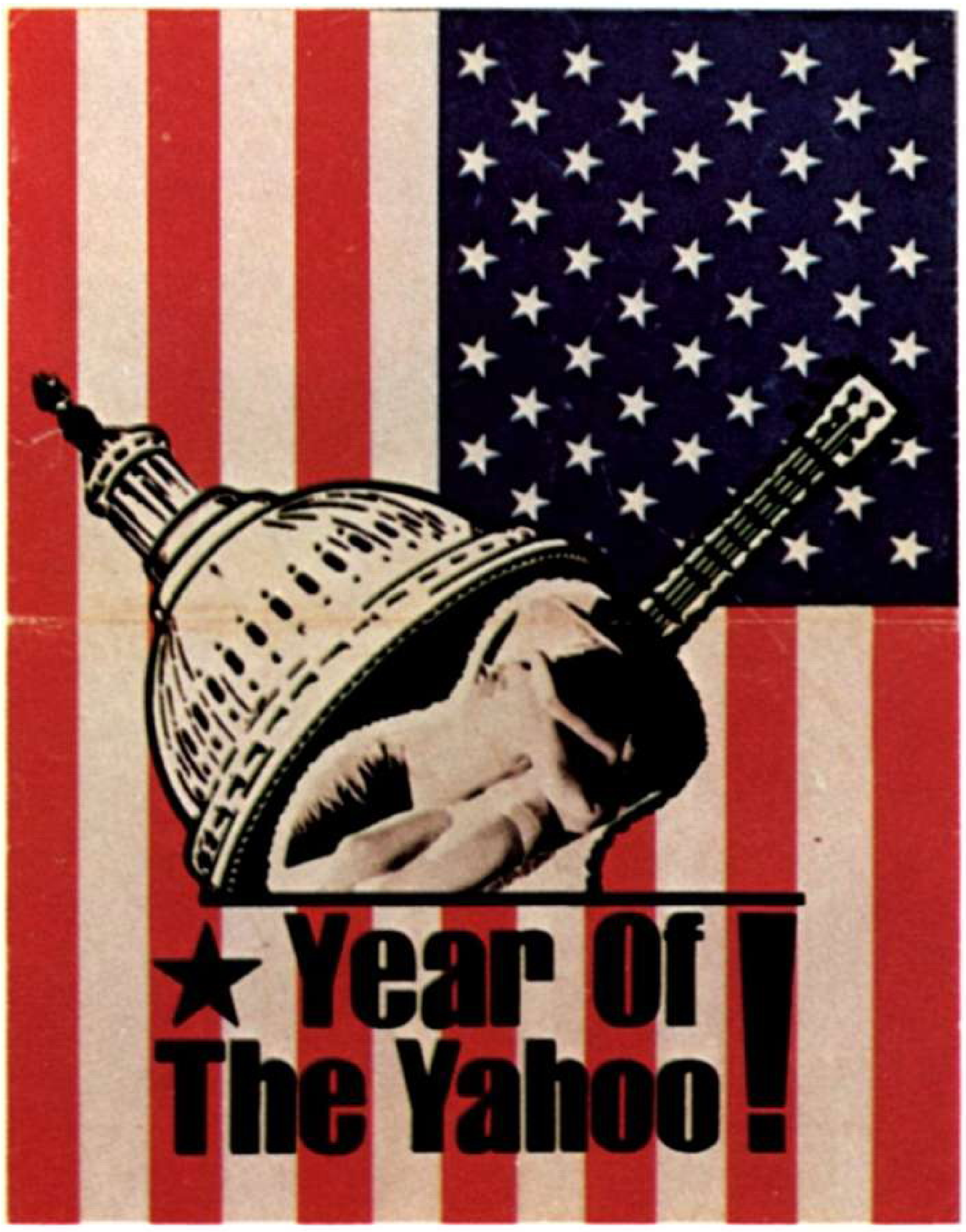
2 **The meat-cleavered face of the bubblegum-chewing victim in *The Gore-Gore Girls.***

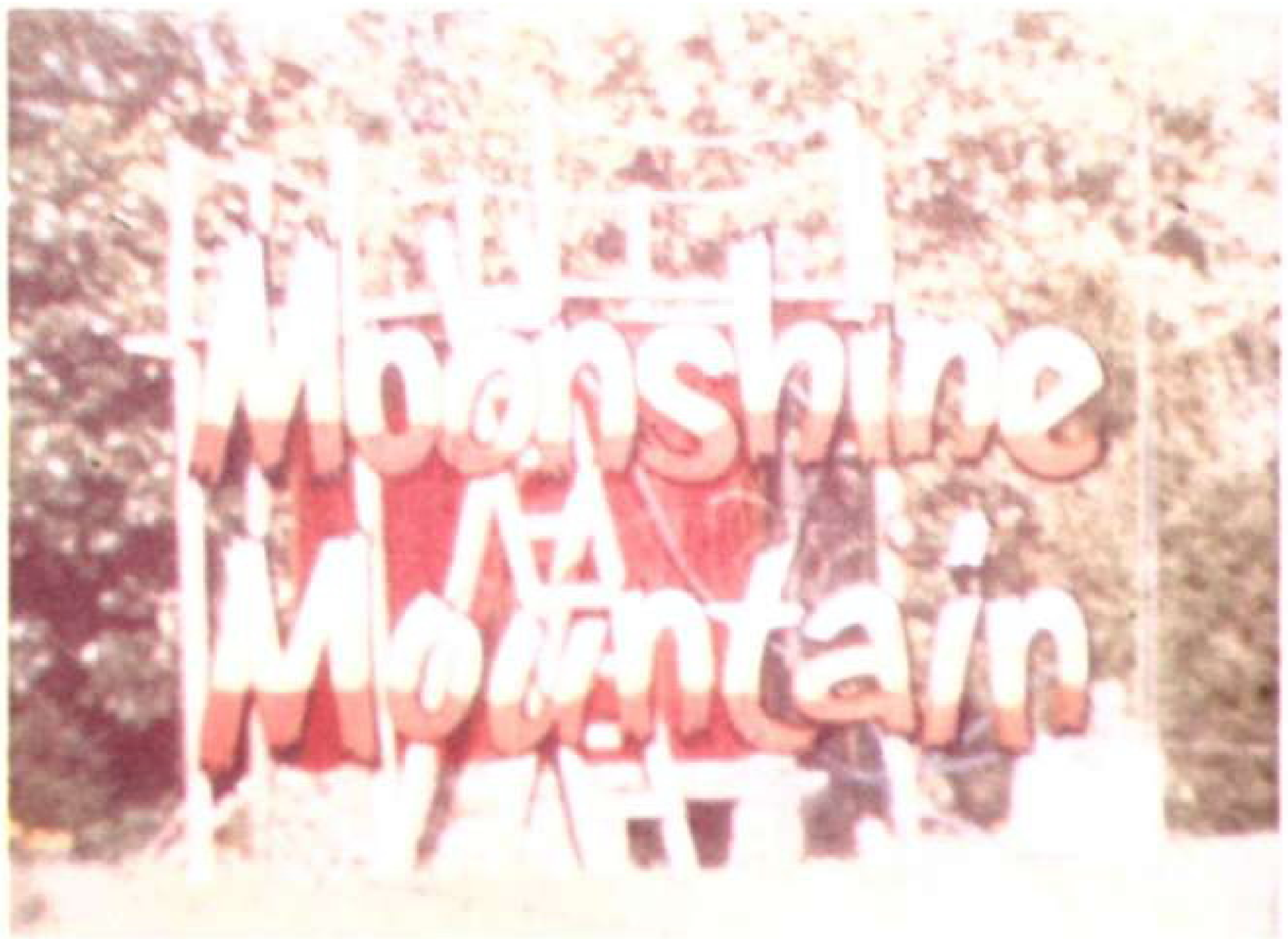
3 **The dummy with life mask from the infamous spike-through-the-head scene from *The Wizard of Gore* (1970).**

4 **The actress all gored up for the same scene. Note the brains oozing from her ear.**

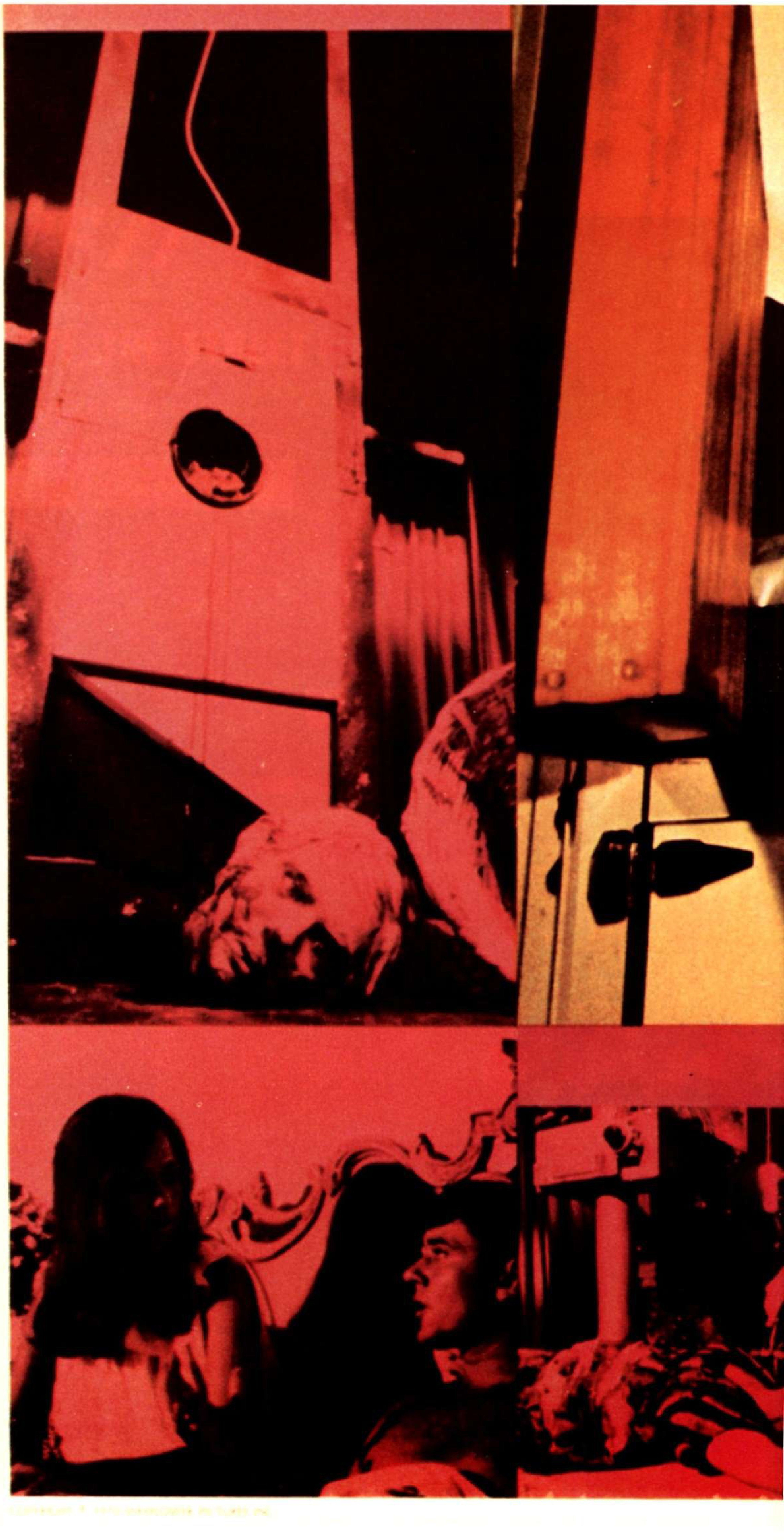
5 **The gigantic whiskey still with supered main title from *Moonshine Mountain* (1964).**

6 **Advertising piece for *The Wizard of Gore* (1970).**

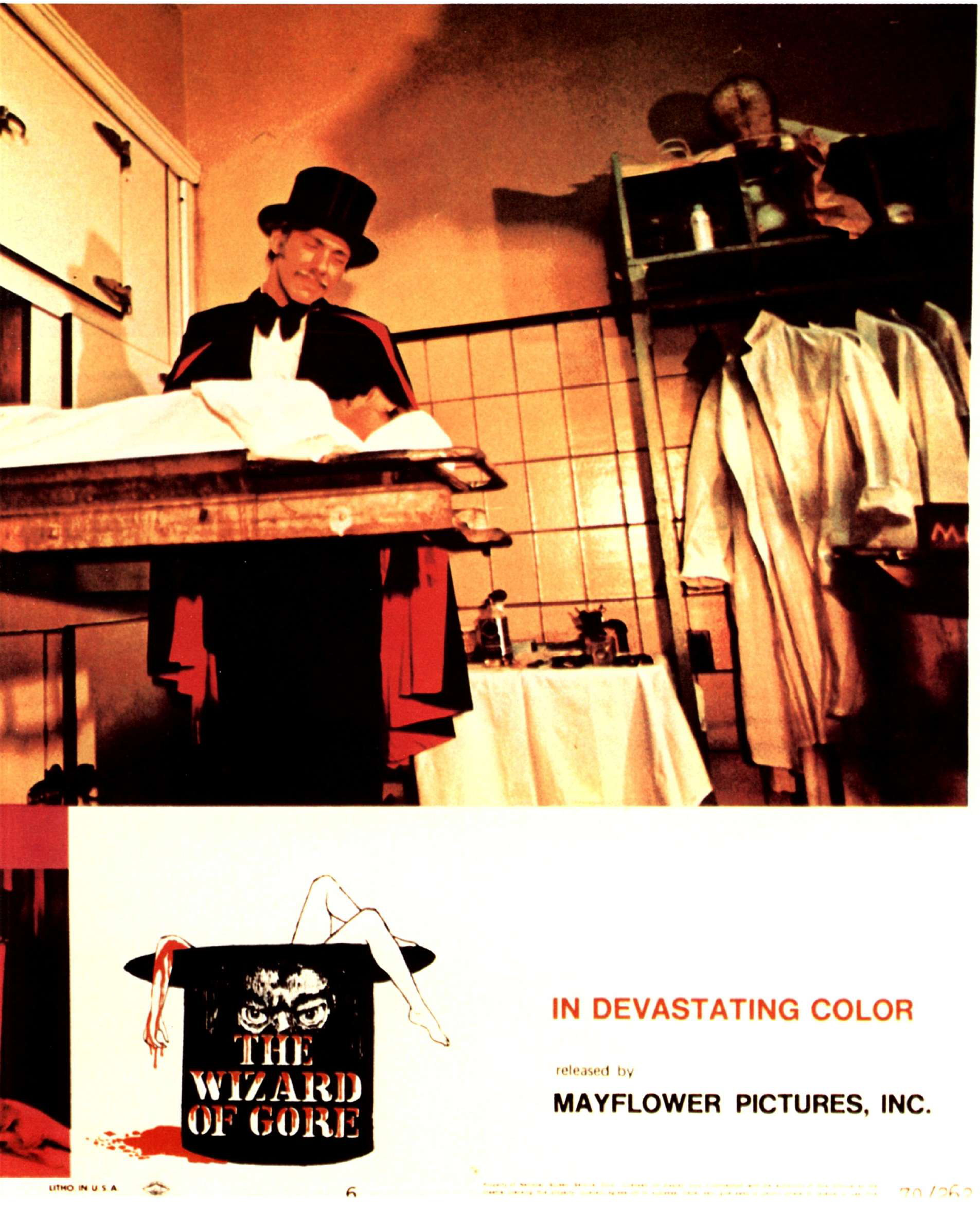

★ Year Of The Yahoo!


Moonshine Mountain

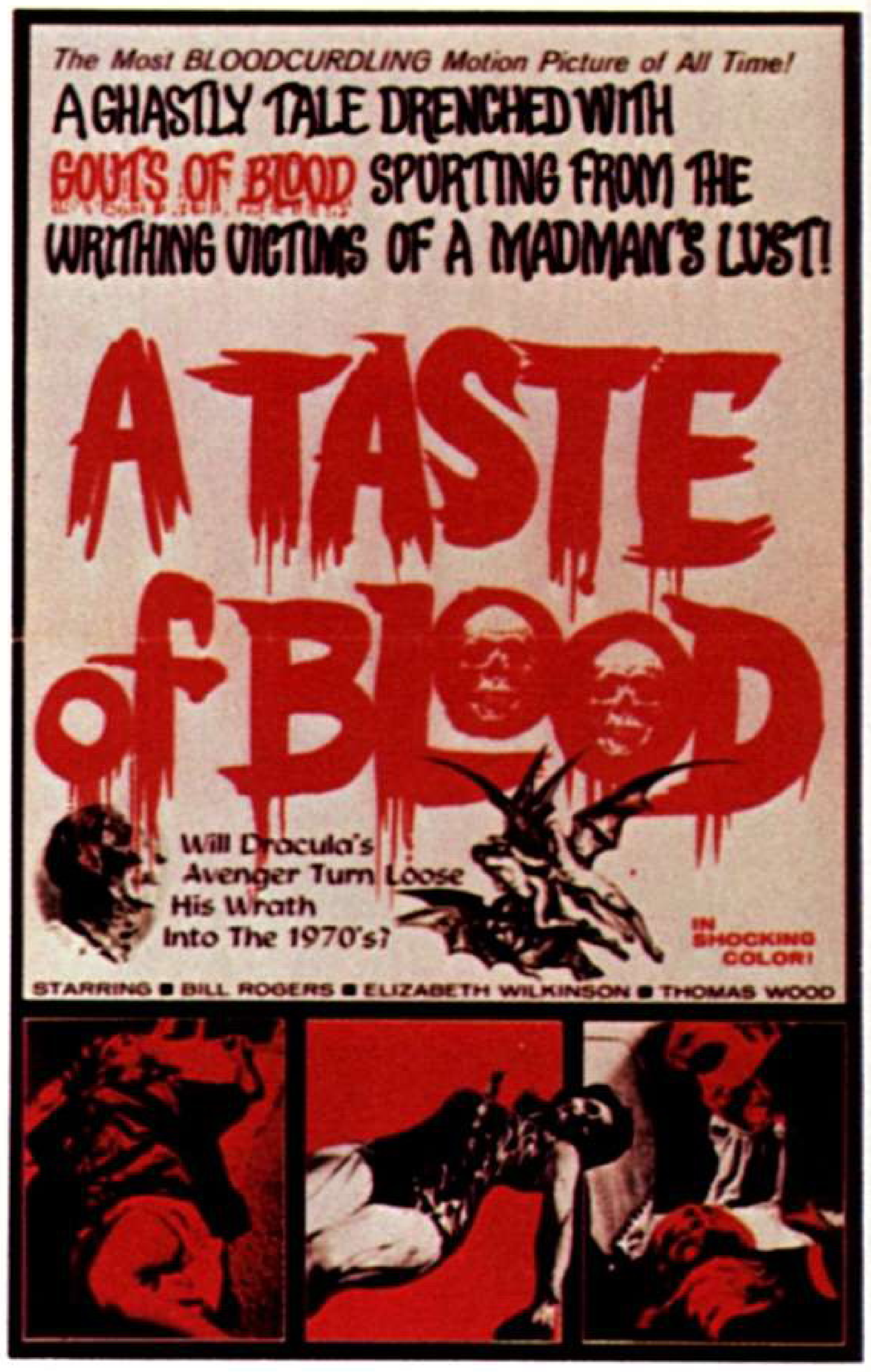
5


Copyright © 1970 [illegible] Pictures Inc.

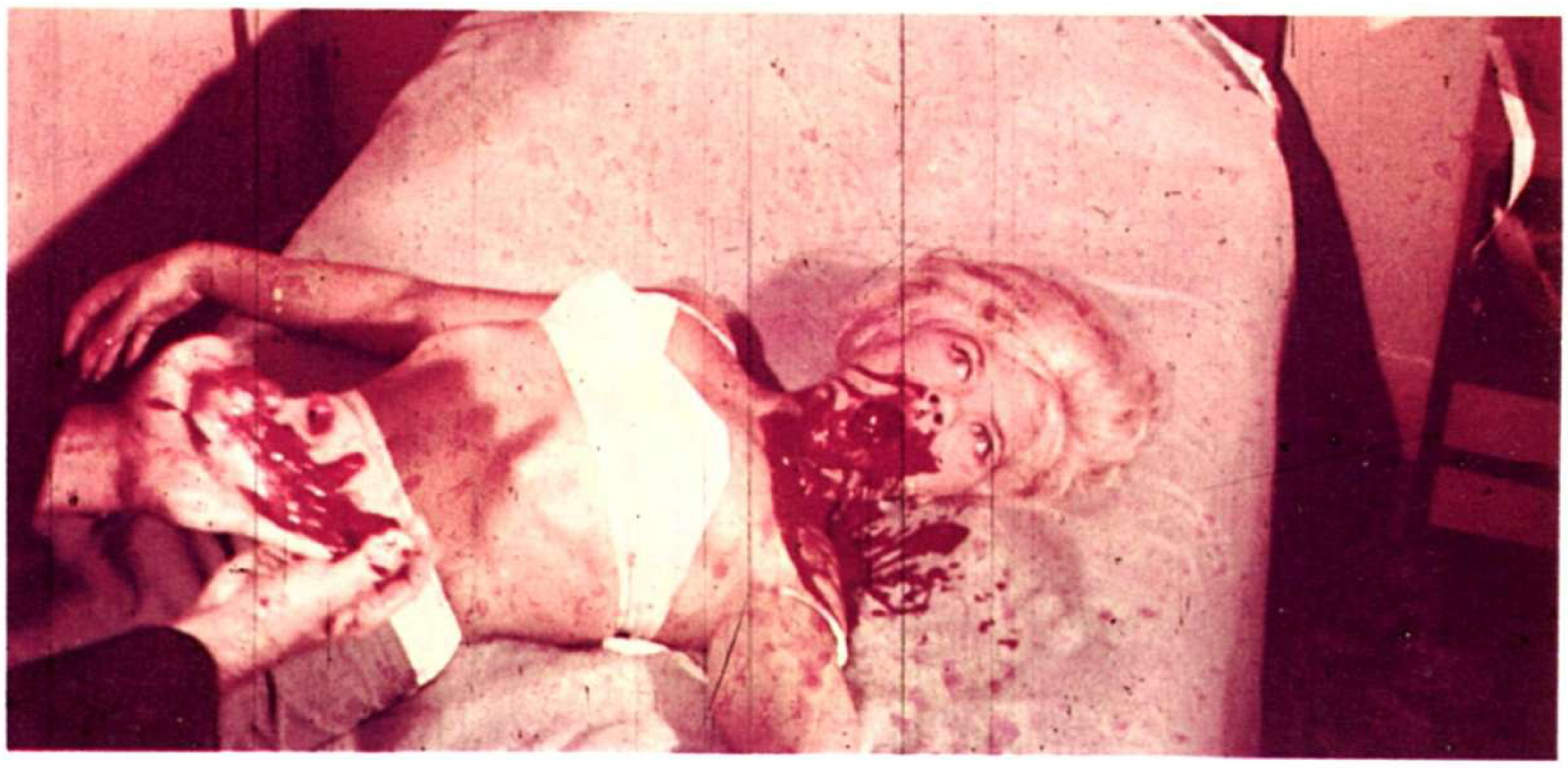
6


THE WIZARD OF GORE
IN DEVASTATING COLOR
released by
MAYFLOWER PICTURES, INC.
LITHO IN U.S.A
6
70/262

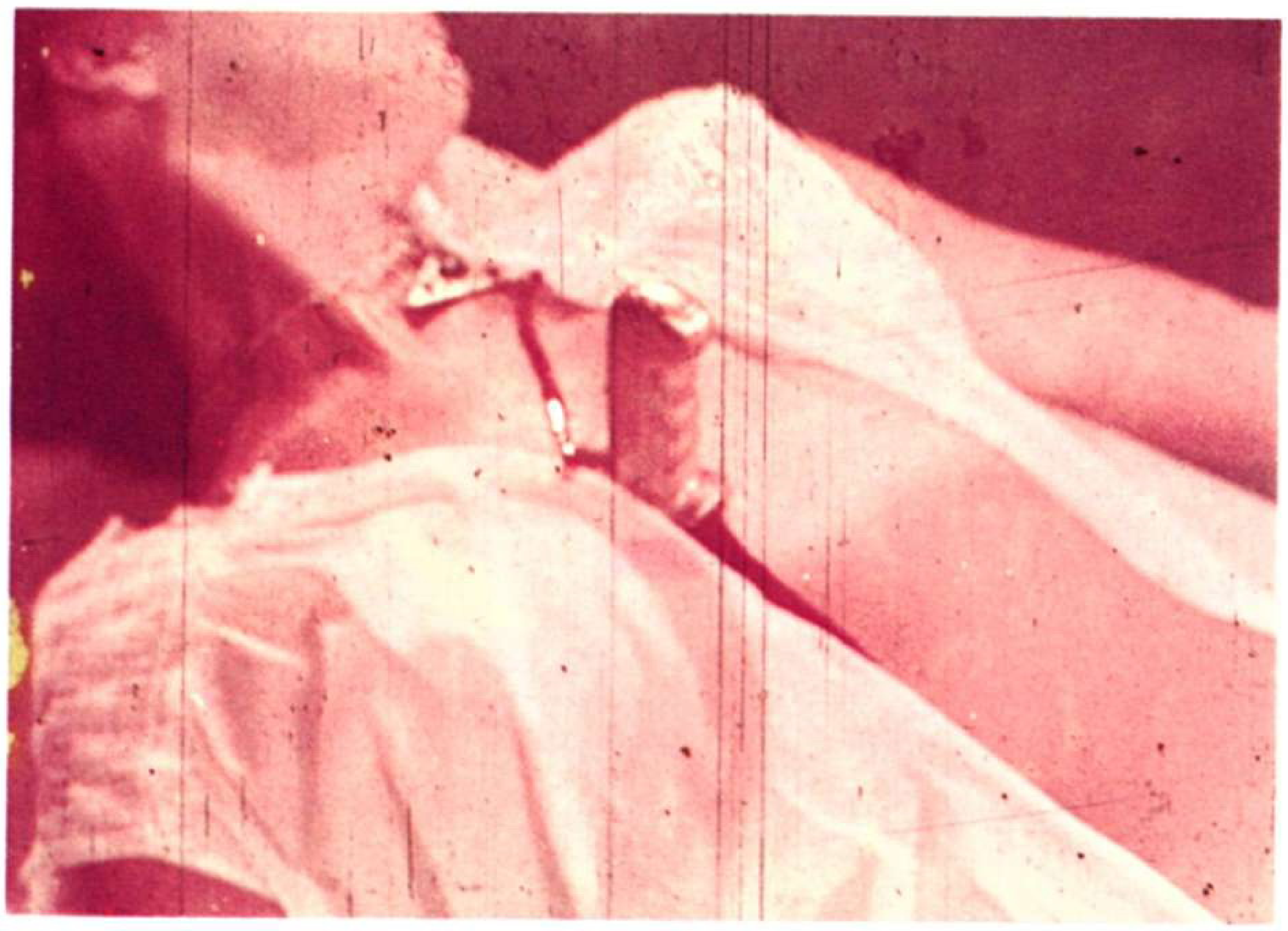
7


The Most BLOODCURDLING Motion Picture of All Time!
A GHASTLY TALE DRENCHED WITH GOUTS OF BLOOD SPORTING FROM THE WRITHING VICTIMS OF A MADMAN'S LUST!
A TASTE of BLOOD
Will Dracula's Avenger Turn Loose His Wrath Into The 1970's?
IN SHOCKING COLOR!
STARRING ■ BILL ROGERS ■ ELIZABETH WILKINSON ■ THOMAS WOOD

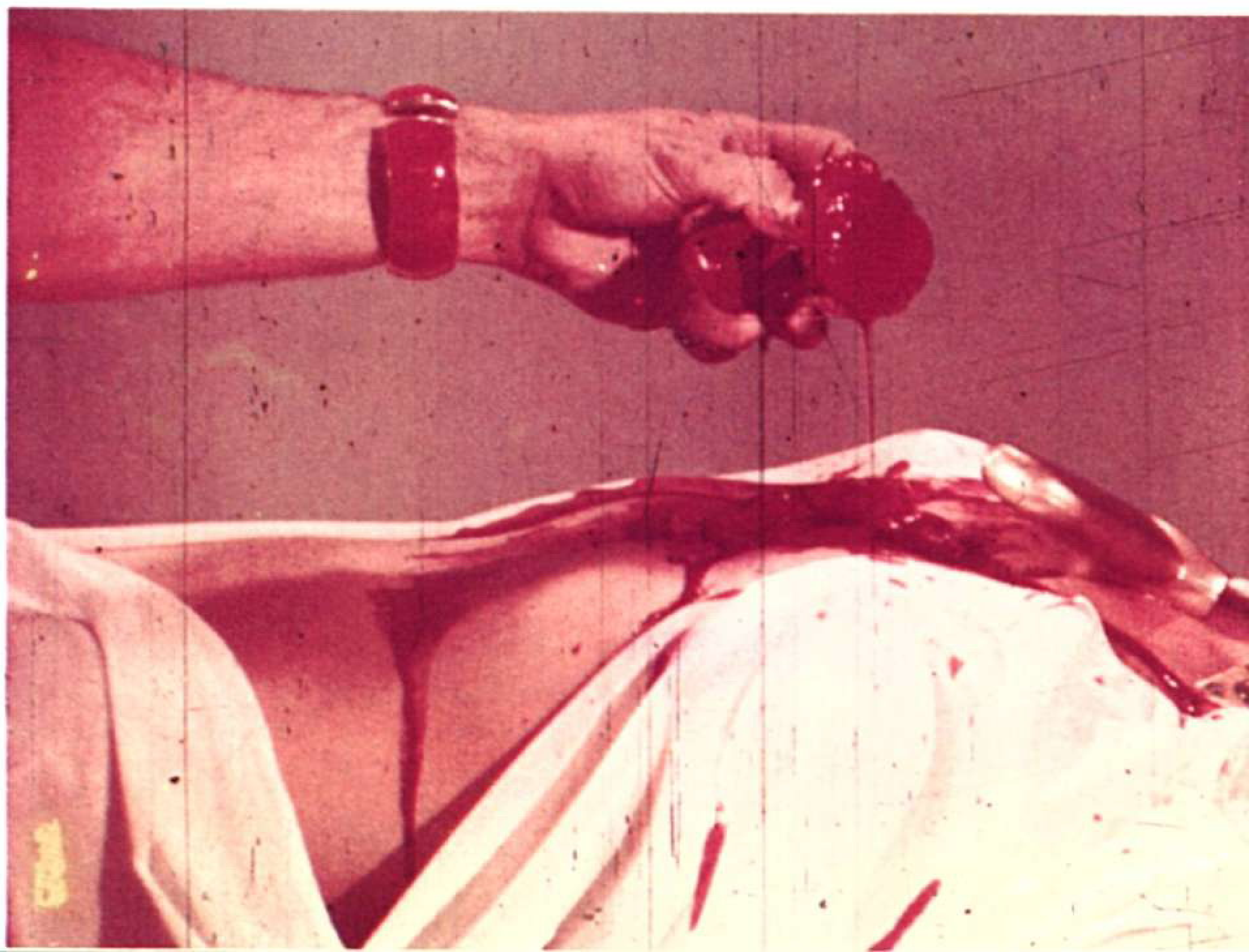
8



9



10



7, 8, 9, 10 **A gallery of gore from the world's first gore film, *Blood Feast* (1963).**

11 **American businessman and vampire John Stone (Bill Rogers) finishes his ghastly repast — the neck of exotic dancer Vivacious Vivian (Gail Janis) — in *A Taste of Blood* (1967).**

12 **A helpless northern college girl is menaced by the mystery killer in *This Stuff'll Kill Ya!* (1971).**

13 **The crucified college girls from *This Stuff'll Kill Ya!***

14 **Vampire John Stone menaces his sleeping wife. Note the atmospheric mood lighting. From *A Taste of Blood.***

11

12

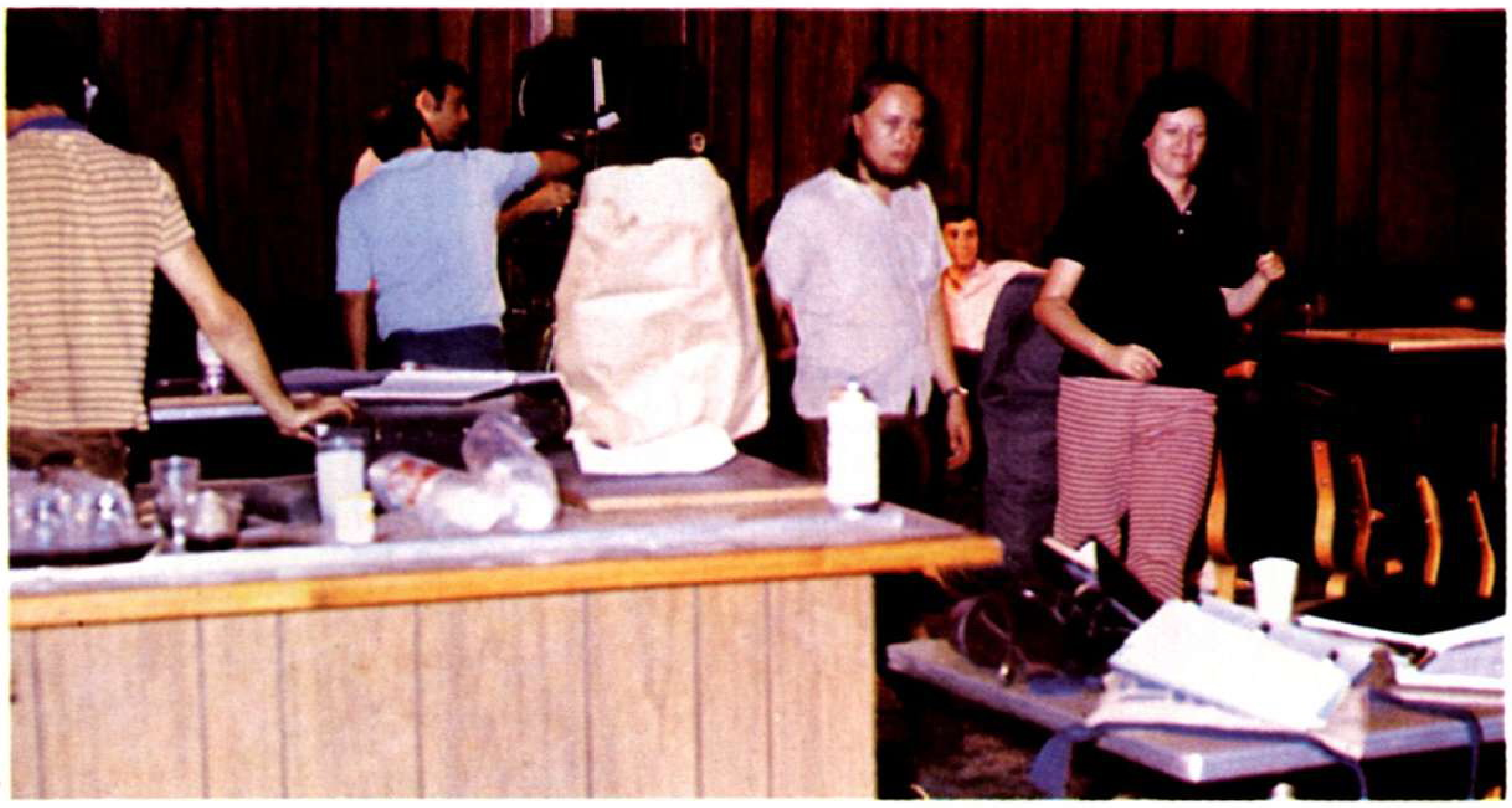
13

14

15

16

17


18

15, 17 **Two views of the fiery wreck of Turnip's moonshine-laden car from *This Stuff'll Kill Ya!* (1971).**

16 **The fight scene between Denny (Steve White, red shirt), and Doug (Rodney Bedell) in *Just for the Hell of It* (1968).**

18 **Shooting in a bar on Chicago's Rush Street, closed during the day, for *The Gore-Gore Girls* (1972). Left to right: Robert Lewis (HGL's son, back to camera with headphones), Alex Ameripoor, HGL, the author, Ray Sager, and continuity girl Evelyn Chaitkin.**

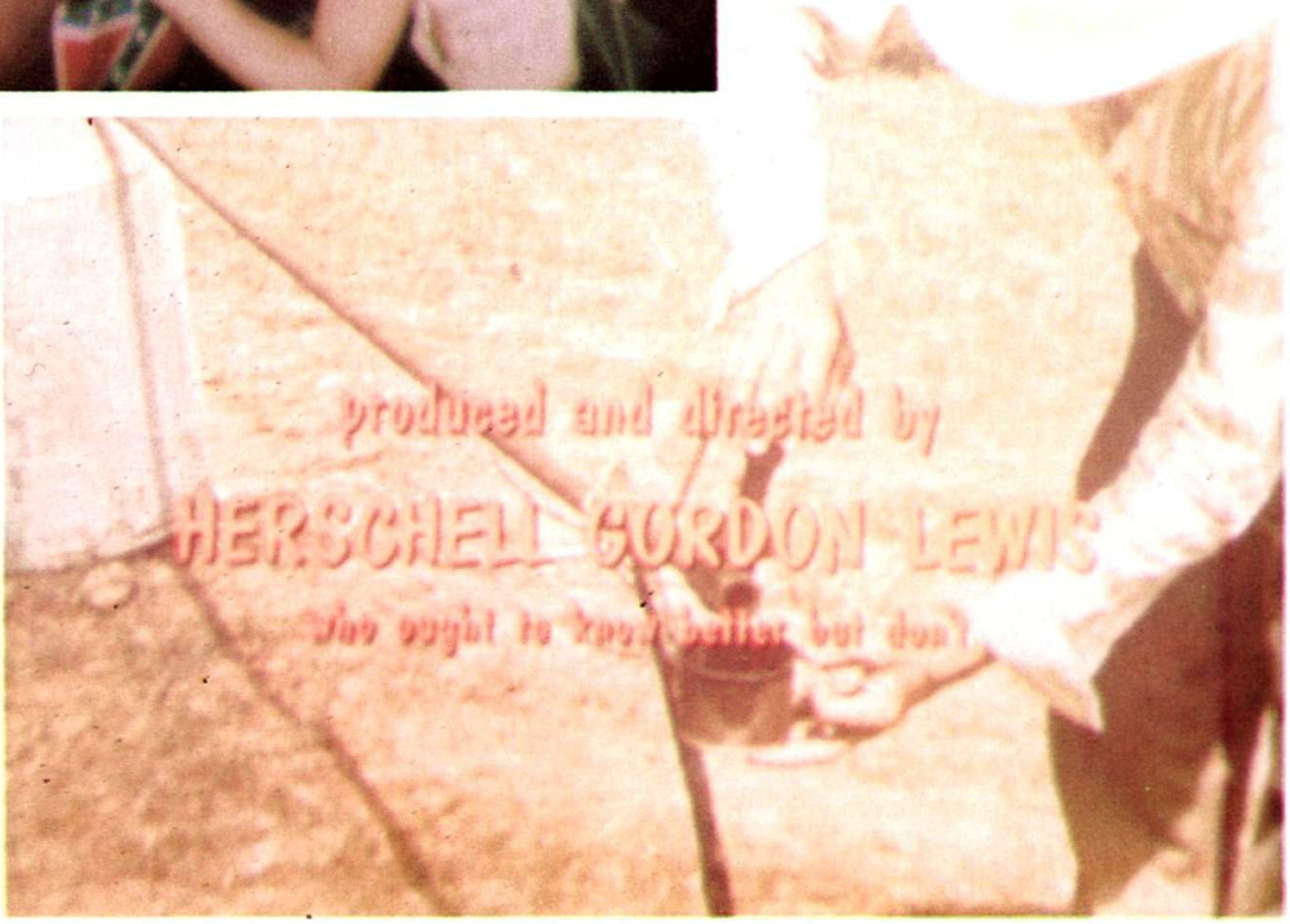
19 **Bea Miller's arm is lopped off with an axe by the good ole boys of Pleasant Valley in *2000 Maniacs* (1964).**

20 **A close-up of Bea Miller's thumb being cut off.**

21 **A moonshiner samples the whiskey from the tap of the still in *Moonshine Mountain* (1964).**

19

20


produced and directed by
HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS
who ought to know better but don't
21

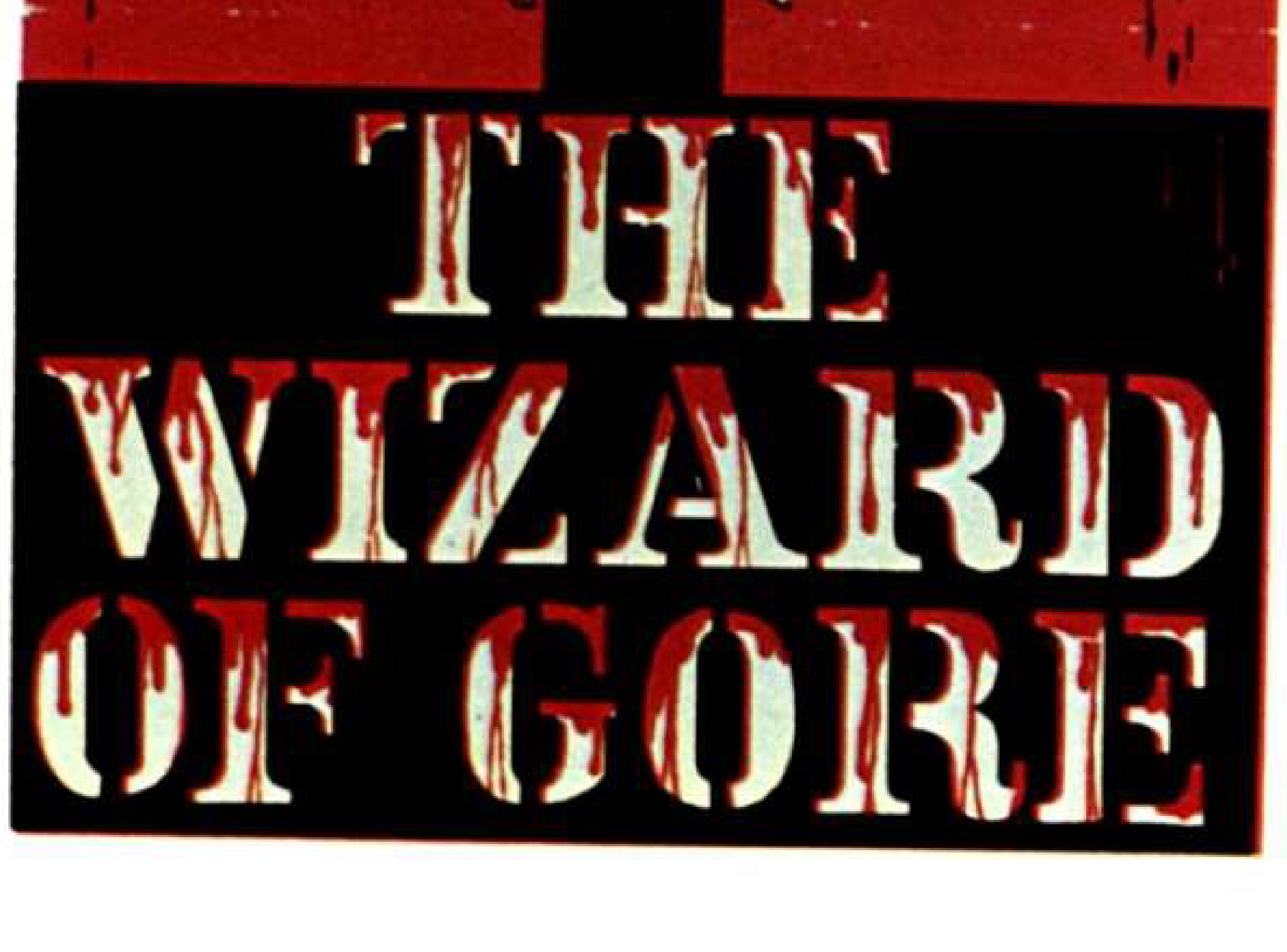
22 **The victim whose face is smashed into the mirror at the opening of *The Gore-Gore Girls* (1972).**

23 **Reporter/heroine Nancy Weston (Amy Farrell) is menaced by the black gloved hand of the mystery murderer in *The Gore-Gore Girls*.**

24 **The bubblegum-chewing victim with the bubble of blood in her mouth and her throat slit. From *The Gore-Gore Girls*.**

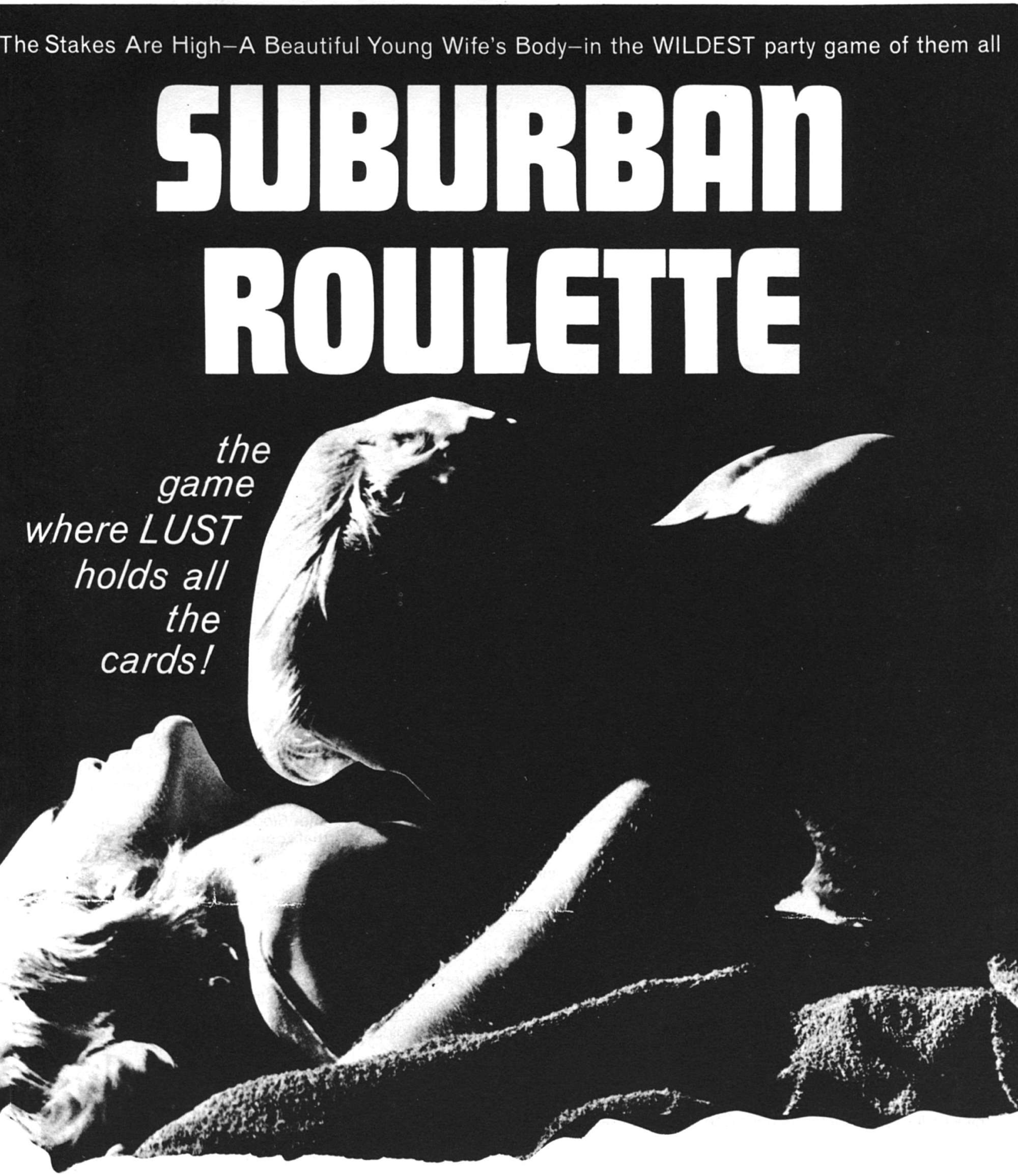
22

23



24

# Get An Eyeful Of What Goes On Behind The Keyholes Of Suburbia!


The Stakes Are High—A Beautiful Young Wife's Body—in the WILDEST party game of them all
SUBURBAN ROULETTE
the game where LUST holds all the cards!

# AFTERWORD

# Lewis on Lewis: a conversation with the amazing HGL

**The following interview with Herschell Gordon Lewis was conducted via telephone to his home in Florida during the spring and summer of 1982. I explained to Herschell that I was writing this book because of renewed public interest in him, his work, and the entire exploitation film field. This is how things went from there:**

**Herschell Gordon Lewis:** I'll tell you a funny story. I met with some people in Tampa recently on a totally different matter. Over dinner, very ceremoniously, one of them said, "The reason I wanted you to stay for dinner is we have a presentation for you." And he drags out a one-sheet, brand new, of *Monster a Go-Go.* And I said, "Where did you get this?" And he said, "It was advertised in a fan magazine." God knows what he paid for that thing. But he took it so seriously, it's a good thing that he tipped me off beforehand because I would have laughed. I think it's funny. But these people, these gorehounds, young people twenty-five to thirty-five, it's just astounding what they're doing. It's really a scream.

**Daniel Krogh:** So you've found paradise in Florida at last.

**HGL:** Absolutely paradise. We have a lovely home. We have a pool.They're installing the whirlpool next week. It's a good life.

**DK:** Where, when and how did you get your trusty Mitchell camera?

**HGL:** I bought that Mitchell from an old film company in Chicago called the Atlas Film Company, which was going out of business. I didn't want a camera. I wanted to simply rent equipment as I needed it. The guy called me one day and out of left field asked me if I wanted to buy a Mitchell. I made him a ridiculously low offer, and he laughed and hung up the phone. Then he called back and said, "You bought it!" He came down with it, and there were tons of things that were not part of the original deal that he threw in: extra tripods and lenses and magazines, and good heavens what a glorious assortment. It had certain advantages in that I could shoot things in bits and pieces without having to rent a camera for a day. That was after we had shot *Blood Feast.* I had another Mitchell that I bought before that from Camera Equipment company in New York, which is now called F&B Ceco. They were the first big company in 35mm rental and sales. When I sold my commercial film studio, I sold that camera with it. I bought that other one from Atlas.

**DK:** Was that the one you still have today?

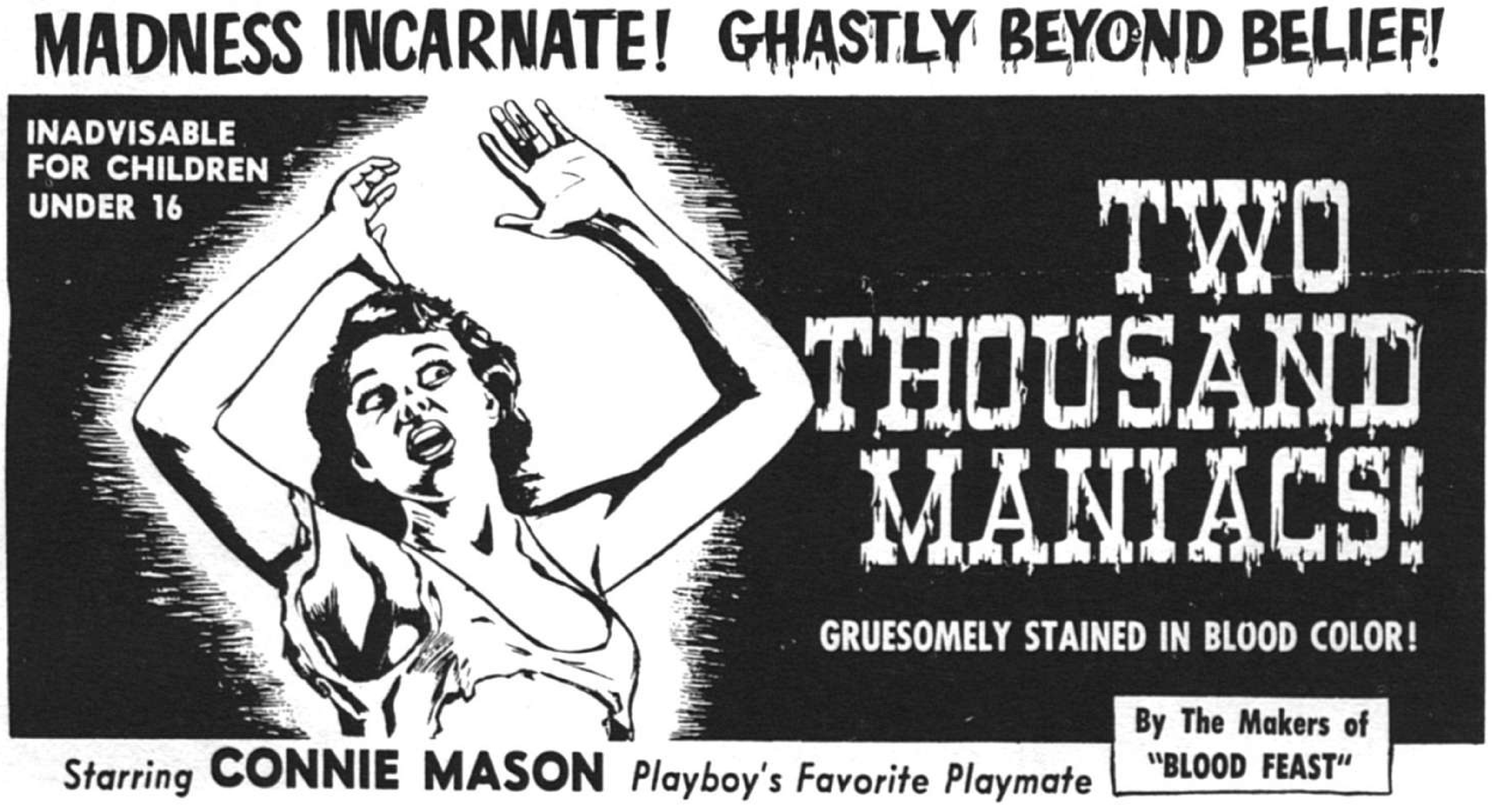
**HGL:** No, that burned up, and I got another one at a better deal yet.

**DK:** Did you know that there are numerous references to you in the American Film Institute's Catalogue of Feature Films—1961 to 1970?

**HGL:** Yes, I know that there are some references in there because someone

1

1 **"It looked like a mannequin's arm because it was freshly cut off but it wouldn't bend." From *2000 Maniacs.***


MADNESS INCARNATE! GHASTLY BEYOND BELIEF!
INADVISABLE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 16
TWO THOUSAND MANIACS!
GRUESOMELY STAINED IN BLOOD COLOR!
By The Makers of "BLOOD FEAST"
Starring CONNIE MASON Playboy's Favorite Playmate

wrote me a letter with a questionnaire in it once, which I filled out. I assume that it went into their archives.

**DK:** You're listed under your real name and three pseudonyms.

**HGL:** They've got Lewis H. Gordon and that kind of thing?

**DK:** Yes, and Sheldon Seymour and Sonny Seymour, too.

**HGL:** That they didn't get from me. That *is* surprising.

**DK:** They've got the casts, credits and plot synopses of most of your films.

**HGL:** Great heavens, that's something even I don't have. Well, you see, we are, if nothing else, immortalized in part.

**DK:** What tidbits do you remember from the production of *Blood Feast*?"

**HGL:** *Blood Feast,* as you might have heard me say, Dan, was shot back to back with one of the films we shot for Leroy Griffith, *Bell, Bare, and Beautiful.* In fact, we used some of the same cast because we didn't have time to go cast hunting. If you remember *Blood Feast,* you remember they go to a lecture on ancient Egyptian religious cults. The lecturer was an old carny friend of Dave Friedman's—Al Golden, who also appeared in *Bell, Bare, and Beautiful.* He kept saying "indentify" instead of "identify." After thirty-five takes, I was ready to give up, but he got it on the next take. We also burned a hole in a street in Miami making *Blood Feast.* We had the arm that was baked in the pizza oven, and to get it to look baked, we took it out into the street and doused it with gasoline. The gasoline can caught fire, and we couldn't put it out. By the time we did get it put out, it had burned a nice round hole in the asphalt street. We tried to melt some asphalt to run into the hole so no one would break an axle, but were only partially successful.

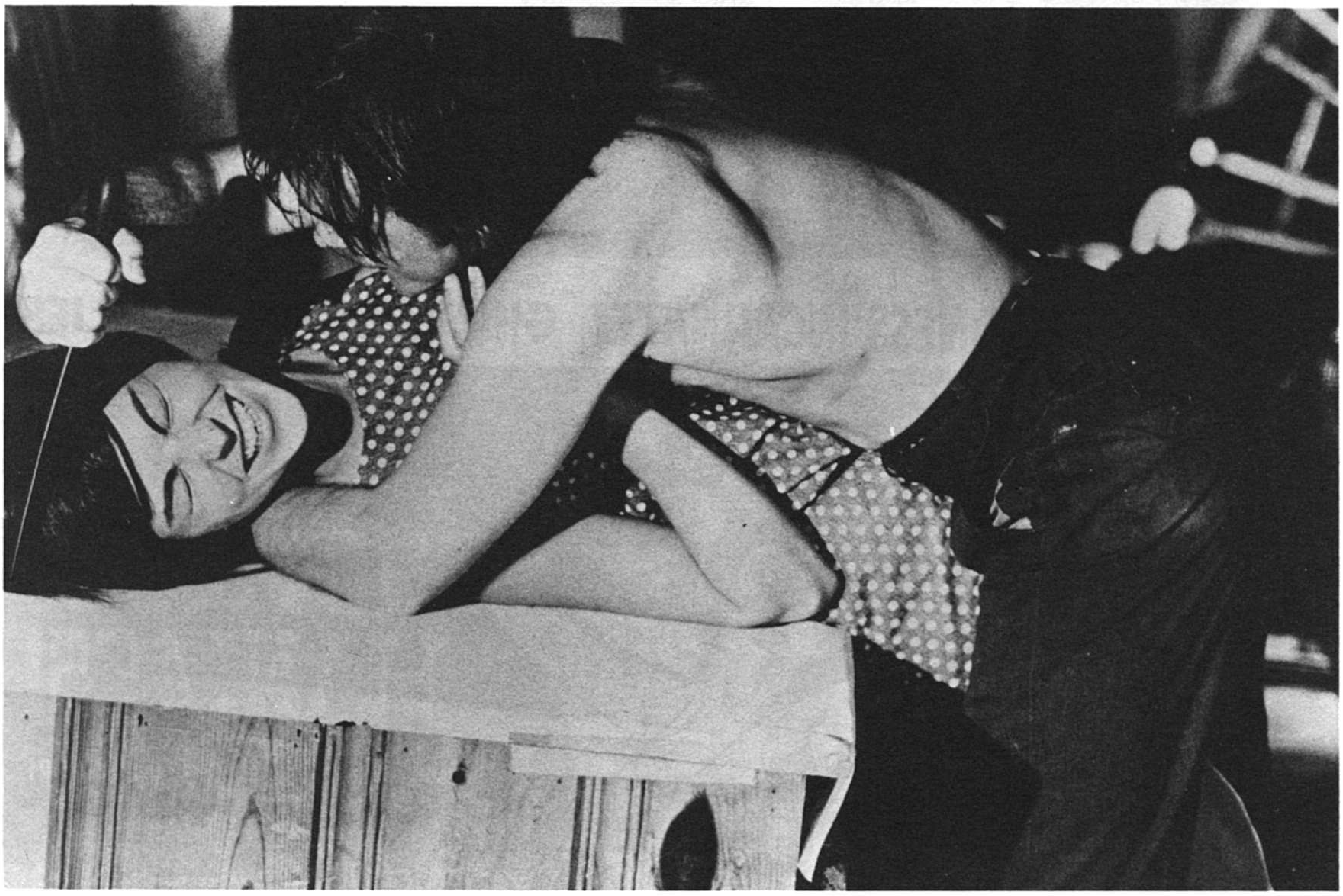
**DK:** Let's move on to *2000 Maniacs.*

**HGL:** The funniest thing I can remember about making that film was we stuck this banner across the main street of a town called St. Cloud, Florida. The banner said, "Pleasant Valley Centennial—1865-1965." We shot the picture in 1963. Well, I came out on the porch of the hotel where we were all staying one day, and two guys are looking up at this banner. One guy said, "I wonder why Pleasant Valley is having its centennial here?" And the other guy said, "What I don't get is why they put their banner up so far ahead of time." We had a real good time on that picture. It was an excellently contrived picture. I think it was the best acted picture we had outside of *A Taste of Blood.* The only problem we had was that we shot for two days before we found out the Arriflex we had rented from F&B Ceco had a filter left in it. This gave everything we shot a double dose of orange. That was darn near the only time we had to reshoot anything, except for when the pressure plate in the Mitchell was out of whack that one time.

2 **"Everybody had a good time on that picture." Well, maybe not everybody. From *The Gruesome Twosome.***

3 **"When you start making fun of yourself, it's not fair to your audience." From *The Gore Gore Girls.***

2



**DK:** Yes, on *The Gore-Gore Girls.*

**HGL:** Those were the only two times we had to make retakes. In *Gore-Gore Girls,* we lost a marvelous line because of that. I wanted Gentry to sip some wine and say, "Maneschewitz, 1973; that was a real vintage year." I don't think the people who go to these films would appreciate that line of dialogue. But what it proves, along with the white milk and the chocolate milk coming from the girl's nipples, was that we had begun quite consciously to parody our own product. That is really the time to get out. When you start making fun of yourself, it's not fair to your audience. We had a small problem in the editing of *2000 Maniacs* that I fought with the editor, Bob Sinise, about. In the gore scene in the basement room after the girl's arm has been chopped off and it's being fondled, he held the shot three or four feet too long. I felt that because it was a mannequin's arm (we never had the luxury of moveable arms) it would be a dead giveaway. And sure enough, in some review somewhere, they said it looked like a mannequin's arm because it was freshly cut off but it wouldn't bend. I had that arm in my garage in Highland Park for years.

**DK:** I remember you also had the Pleasant Valley plaque in your living room.

**HGL:** Oh yeah, positively! That was made the right way. That was a wax impression from which they make bronze plaques. I loved that. It struck me as having some class to it.

**DK:** Any memories from the production of *Color Me Blood Red?"*

**HGL:** We shot that in Sarasota in a house that was right on the beach, which meant implicitly that we were going to have lousy sound. That film was also cut by Sinise, but under Dave Friedman's instructions. It was my feeling that the canned music they used destroyed that film. Unlike the live music which we had for *2000 Maniacs.* You know, I was the one playing the harmonica on *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* in *2000 Maniacs.* Also, we had a shotgun effect at the end of *Color Me Blood Red.* Someone suggested that we could just take the shot out of the shells, and we could get the sound of the gun going off and the sparks but nothing would happen. I said, "You mean to tell me that just by taking the shot out you can aim this gun at someone and fire it." He said, "Yeah, only the buckshot is dangerous." I said, "We better try it with a mannequin before we aim it at a live actor." So we aimed it at the mannequin and fired. It went through the mannequin and through the wall behind the mannequin. All I could see were headlines reading: "Actor Killed!!" Boy, am I glad we didn't do that!

**DK:** Tell me a little about A Taste of Blood.

**HGL:** That was as I have said my best picture. We had cooperation on that picture that no one has had before or since. We had production values in

3

that. That picture is two hours long.

**DK:** I've been calling it the *Gone With the Wind* of Gore.

**HGL:** It really is.

**DK:** Did you have any trouble getting that big ocean-ship to unload the vampire's casket?

**HGL:** Absolutely none. That was the height of splendid cooperation. We explained what we wanted to do. We told them exactly what we were doing: making a horror film, a Dracula-type picture. They hoisted that box with the casket in it. They even stopped the people from getting off the boat so that we could get shots of them getting off. It was the most perfect piece of cooperation that ever existed. We did it with the public relations people of, I think it was, Emerald Lines. Did I ever tell you the story of how I ended up acting in that picture?

**DK:** The actor didn't show up.

**HGL:** Right, the actor didn't show. So we took some hair from Bob Vercruse, some of his head hair, and made a fake mustache for me. And I pulled a cap down over my head and spoke in a thick British accent. I figured nobody would know who it was. I was horrified at the mix to have a guy turn to me and say, "Hey, what are you doing in this thing?" Oh, Jesus, I thought, my cover is blown. Also on *A Taste of Blood:* in the middle of the night we had these prop police firing blanks. I didn't want to stop them because they were doing it well, and they weren't professional actors. But surer than hell, that racket in the middle of the night brought out a whole passle of real on-duty police with their sirens wailing and their mars lights flashing. We had a lot of explaining to do at that moment. It was about four-thirty in the morning.

**DK:** Let's move on to *The Gruesome Twosome.*

**HGL:** That's the film where we sawed through the tube with the blood in it just as I was getting this guy to blow on the end of it. The two things happened coincidentally, and that stage blood flew all over the room, all over everybody and everything. It was a real "gruesome twosome." But at the tail of the picture, where our heroine is supposed to poke out the eye of the homicidal son, our friend, Miss Downe, had some cow eyeballs which were about thirty-seven times larger than a human eyeball. So, we were scrambling around for something we could use, and all we could find was a fish. We ended up using fish eyeballs—which looked pretty real by the way.

**DK:** Could you clarify which actors had which roles in that picture?

**HGL:** Elizabeth Davis was the mother, Chris Martell was her homicidal son, Gretchen Welles was the heroine, and Rodney Bedell was the hero. Rodney Bedell was the guy we used to call "Brick Bulgemuscle," the all-American boy. A real nice guy, but that was our staff name for him. Everybody had a good time on that picture. There's a scene in the middle of the film where some coeds are sitting on their beds in the dormitory having some Kentucky Fried Chicken. We included that scene in exchange for fried chicken for everybody for lunch that day. We kept telling the people at the chicken store that we had thirty people. Well, there weren't any thirty people on any of our pictures. Boy, did we feast on fried chicken.

**DK:** I remember that as being your favorite entree.

**HGL:** It certainly is! It was and is. I remember we had the same deal with Church's Fried Chicken for *Year of the Yahoo!* We had Arby's on *This Stuff'll Kill Ya!*

**DK:** I describe the Herschell Lewis meal as being fried chicken with all the fixings, Orange Julius to drink, and frozen custard for dessert.

**HGL:** Boy, oh boy, that to me is the kingdom of heaven.

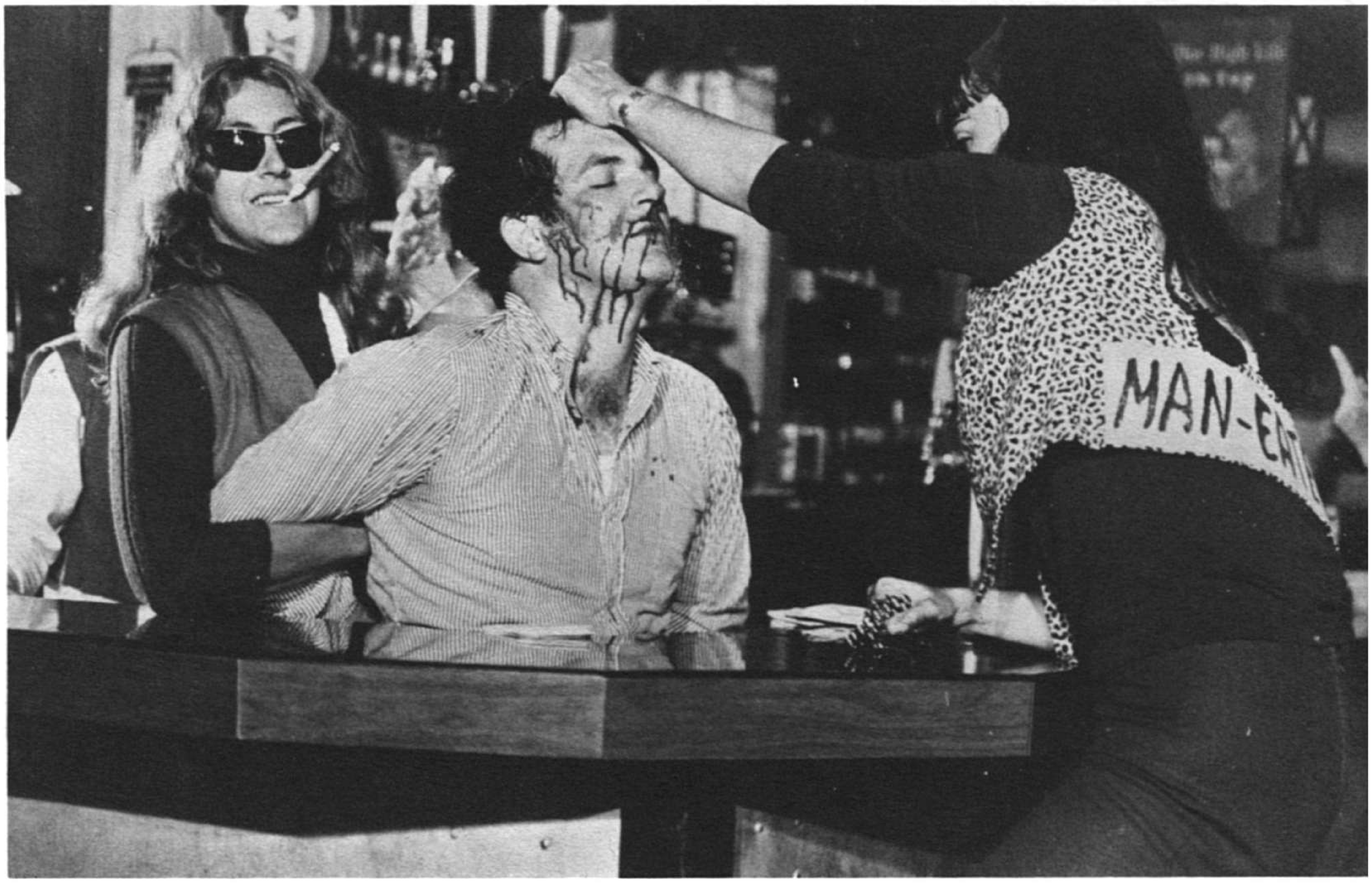
**DK:** Any memories of *She-Devils on Wheels* or *Just for the Hell of It?*

**HGL:** There was this girl, Agi Gynes, that we had in *Just for the Hell of It.* She was supposed to say, "They shouldn't listen to that senile old woman." Instead, she kept saying, "They shouldn't listen to that senile old wo . . . MAN." We did that scene all afternoon. Later, I said to myself, "You jerk, why didn't you just change the line?" She never did get it. That girl was our jinx on that picture. She was trying to prove she could ride a motorcycle because she wanted to be in *She-Devils,* which we were shooting at the same time. She borrowed a 125cc bike from another girl, who we called Fang be-

4 **"We wound up with AIP distributing the picture in some exchange areas." From *She-Devils on Wheels.***

5 **Shooting a scene between Abraham Gentry (Frank Kress) and Nancy Weston (Amy Farrell) seated left for *The Gore-Gore Girls.* An unknown boom man holds the mike as the author prepares to slate the take. Cameraman Alex Ameripoor is barely visible behind the camera. Director Lewis watches at right.**

4



cause she only had one tooth, and drove the damn thing right into the swimming pool of the motel where we were staying. They were going to throw us out. There was oil and grease all over that pool.

**DK:** It's too bad you missed shooting that.

**HGL:** Really, because she came up and said, "Look at me, Mr. Lewis, I can do wheelies." And as she said it, into the pool she went with the damn thing. As I remember, she pulled a dying swan routine, but no one gave a hoot for her. They were all more concerned with the bike and the pool, which I thought was very funny.

**DK:** What do you remember about the production of *The Wizard of Gore*?

**HGL:** If you remember that final scene where Montag is supposed to tear the heroine apart: I could have killed our effects girl that day because I told her exactly what I wanted, and she didn't do it. I knew just what I wanted, a goat

5

6

6 "That girl was our jinx on that picture." Jeanne, (Agi Gynes) the heroine in *Just For the Hell of It.*

carcass which we could cover with mortician's wax. When Montag started to dig in there, he would have literally picked the carcass to pieces. It would have been the most horrifying effect ever. Instead she got some goat ribs and tried to fit them to our rather buxom heroine. It didn't come off at all because we couldn't show our actress' bare busom. The only time we had any nudity in a gore picture was *The Gore-Gore Girls*, and we didn't even have much there.

**DK:** You used *A Taste of Blood* to audition for Roger Corman. What happened?

**HGL:** Yes, I did. That was at Alex Ameripoor's insistence. He, Roger Corman, came back at me with an offer to do a woman's prison picture, but he was only going to pay $40,000. I figured the way he had his script laid out, it would cost $100,000 to do, and I was not that anxious to do business with Roger Corman.

**DK:** It's true that American-International wanted to buy *She-Devils on Wheels?*

**HGL:** Yes, that's true. What happened was that we were negotiating with two companies on *She-Devils*. One was a company called Cinemation which is owned by Jerry Gross, who made a hard offer on the picture. My partner on *She-Devils*, Fred Sandy, turned the offer down because he was an old AIP hand and a friend of Sam Arkoff's. We later couldn't make a deal with AIP that made any sense because although they wanted to handle the picture, they could not make us a negative guarantee. So we wound up with AIP distributing the picture in some exchange areas.

**DK:** I remember it played a saturation double bill in Chicago with *Born Losers*.

**HGL:** Exactly, but we had the top feature on a fifty-fifty deal.

**DK:** Turning to a completely different subject, I was wondering if you had any thoughts on the irony of fate that brought us to Spahn's Movie Ranch, the then home of the Charles Manson "family," during the shooting of *Linda and Abilene*?

**HGL:** Yes. But who knew at the time! I've often thought of that. The whole idea is sickening. All I can think back to is all the strange people who hung around that ranch, and which one of them might have been involved in that. Might we have changed the course of history by saying something to them? All I remember is that the place seemed insane, what with this dog running around with a bell tied to its neck, driving itself crazy; and the beat up stuntman whose left hand was so crippled he couldn't even hold the reigns of his horse. And number one, the ranch was hopeless photographically because there were telephone lines all around. We had to keep shooting down to avoid getting them in the frame. There was no way of getting any vista effect.

**DK:** I've noticed in some recent interviews that you seem to have an ambivalent attitude toward returning to the film business.

**HGL:** That's exactly right. I do have an ambivalent feeling. I'm simply having such a good time that I would hate to interrupt my present lifestyle. Obviously, if someone were to offer me an enormous amount of money to direct a picture, which I doubt will ever happen, I would consider it. But to go back to the hassles that the film business represented: fighting with flim-flam distributors and incompetent actors, etc. In terms of work per dollar received, I much prefer what I am doing.

**DK:** Yes, I remember the sheer amount of physical labor involved in shooting.

**HGL:** Especially with a low-budget film, a pitch-in kind of thing. As you know, I was the producer and director, also sometimes the writer and the cameraman, and the lighting man, and I don't know what else. I don't think I'd ever get back into it on that basis. Although, I've often felt that you and Alex and I alone could produce a full-length feature without any trouble at all—if we could get some bull crew to pack up the gear at the end of the day.

**DK:** Had you always had a desire to make feature films, or was it just a way of earning a living that you fell into?

**HGL:** When I first started in the feature film business, I had already been in the commercial film business, so I knew how to make films technically. It had never occurred to me that I could make features. When I first started out, I didn't know it was possible to make a film and have it distributed without being part of the Hollywood entente. Nowadays, in 1983, it is not only easier, it's expected.

**DK:** In a way, were your film productions sort of working vacations from your advertising business?

**HGL:** That was true in every way. I loved the film business. I hated certain aspects of the advertising business. The playing banker to accounts that didn't pay me, which ultimately proved my undoing in that business.

**DK:** Which of your films is your favorite?

**HGL:** My favorite film is *2000 Maniacs*. I think though that the best film we ever made was *A Taste of Blood*. But my favorite is still *2000 Maniacs*.

**DK:** What do you think about *Year of the Yahoo!?* I thought that it was very well done.

**HGL:** Yes, that film never really got the chance it deserved. That's another one I really like because I wrote all the music for it—those hillbilly songs that I'm a nut for anyway. I just feel that film never got a chance to play the way it should have. It was too far ahead of its time. The mistake I made with that picture was in not making it a true exploitation film.

**DK:** Any final comment to sum up your feature film career?

**HGL:** Dan, I would only say this: you had to be there. My opinion is we got more on film per dollar spent than anybody before or since.

# FILMOGRAPHY

1

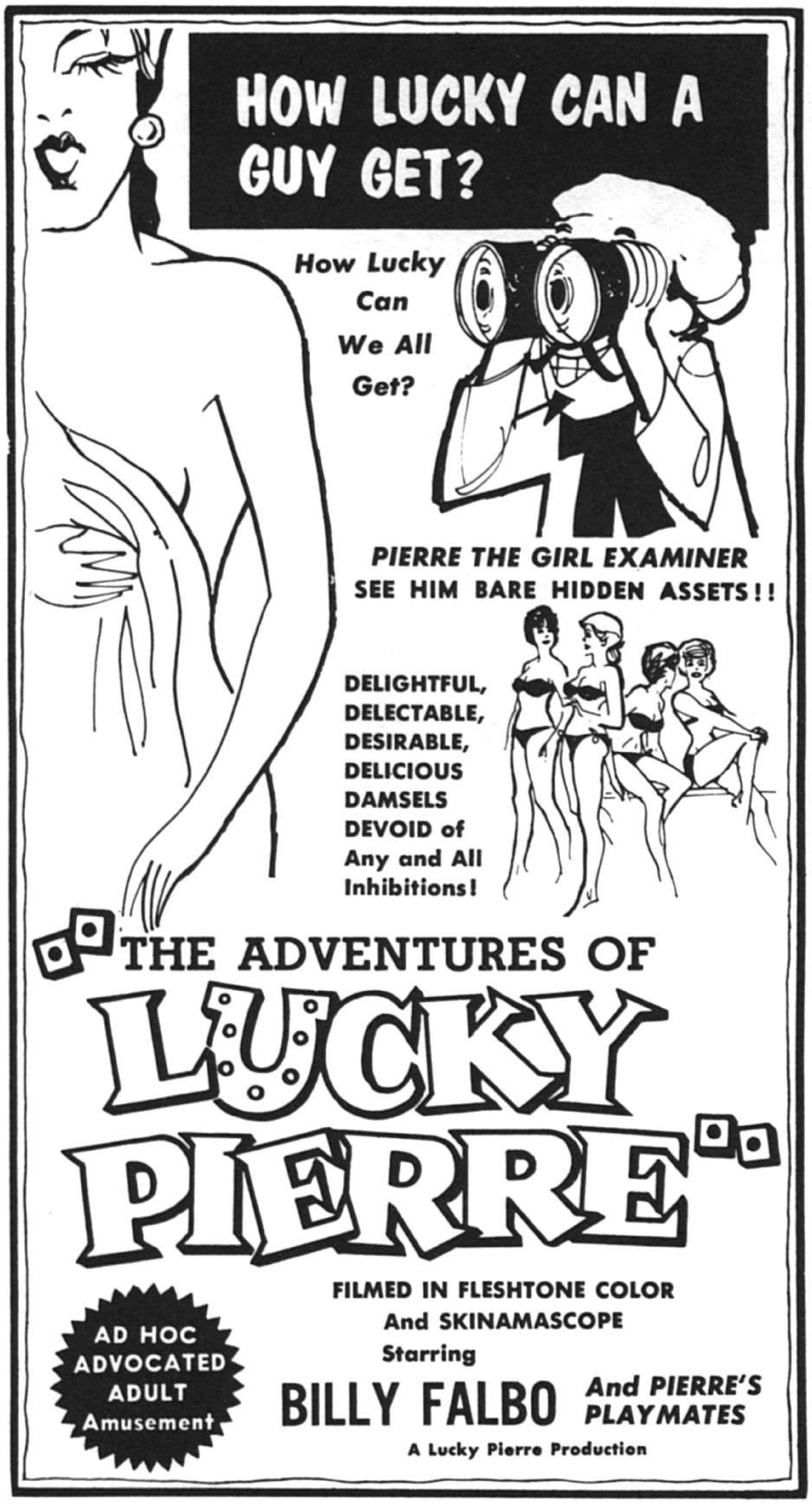
**The Prime Time**
(1960) Black & White. 35mm. 76 minutes. A Mid-Continent Films, Inc. Production released by Essanjay Films Inc.
*Cast:* Jean (JoAnn LeCompte), McKeen (Frank Roche), Tony (James Brooks), The Beard (Ray Gromwold), Gloria (Maria Pavell), Shorty (Robert Major), Ruthie (Betty Senter), Painted Woman (Karen Black), Detective (Joe Greco), Mrs. Norton (Eileen Lindhoff), Norton (Barry Hopkins), Photographer (Penny Kunard), Jackson (Paul Lamearaux), Bartender (Andy Lindhoff), Sally (Bettina Brandt), Ray (Ron Siden).
*Credits:* Producer: Herschell G. Lewis. Director: Gordon Weisenborn. Associate Producer: Irwin S. Joseph. Production Supervisors: David F. Friedman and Charles Ticho. Screenplay: Robert Abel. Additional Dialogue: Marjorie-Lee Joseph. Director of Photography: Andy Costikyan. Camera Operator: George Lussow. Assistant Cameraman: Ken Mazawa. Sound Recordist: Bill Stube. Film Editor: Elsie Kerbin. Make-up: Edward Meekin. Art Direction: Orville Hurt. Optical Effects: Consolidated Film Industries. Music: Marty Rubinstein and Buddy Frye. Styles: The Size Nine Shop, Chicago. Advertising, Publicity and Exploitation under the direction of David F. Friedman.
*Shot in Chicago, Illinois, Summer 1959.*

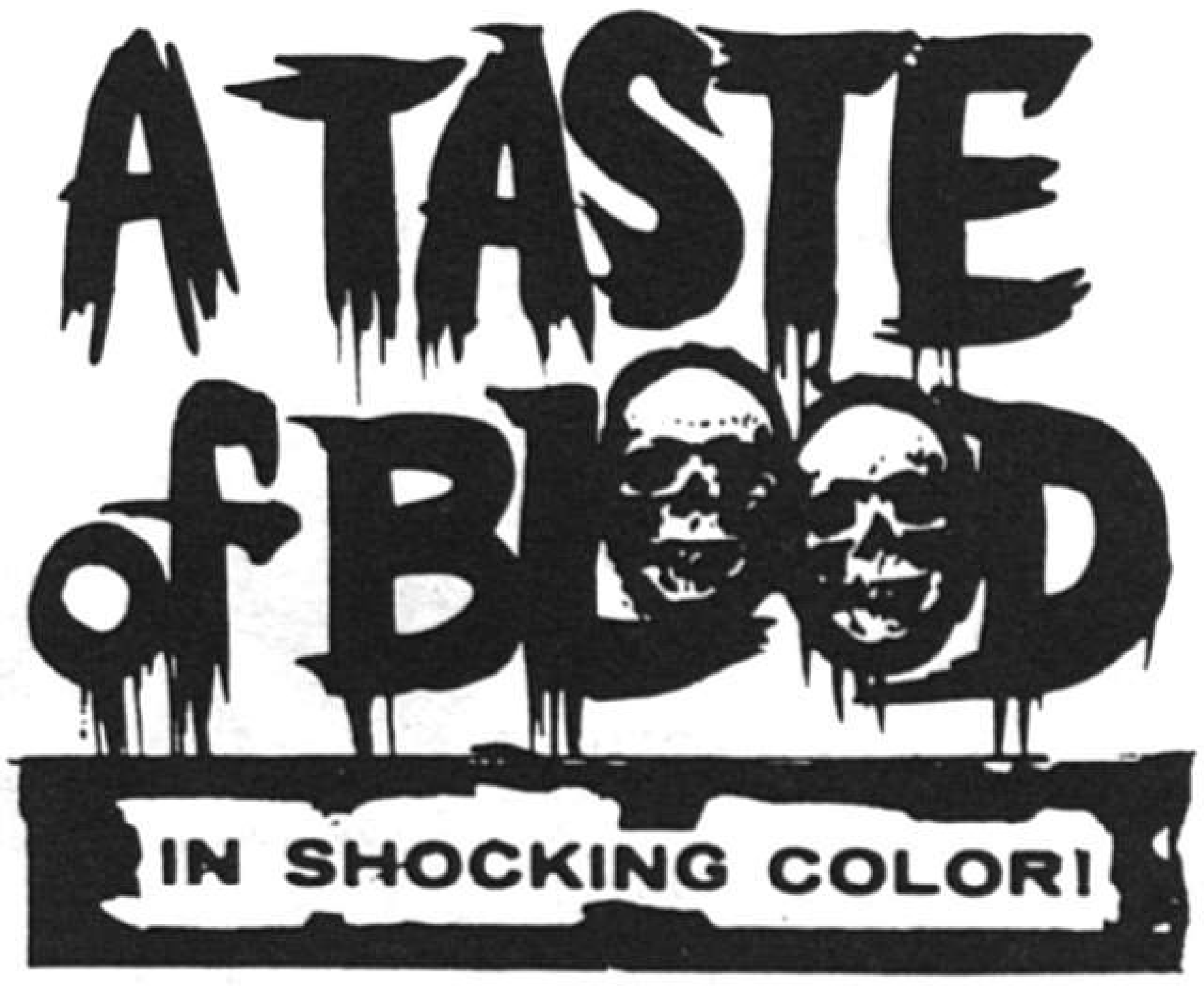
**Living Venus**
(1960) Black & white. 35mm. 74 minutes. A Mid-Continent Films, Inc. production distributed by Creative Services.
*Cast:* Jack Norwall (William Kerwin), Peggy Brandon (Danica D'Hondt), Ken Carter (Harvey Korman), with (Jeanette Leahy, Lawrence J. Aberwood, Robert Bell, Linne Ahlstrand, Billy Falbo, and Bob Scobey's Band).
*Credits:* Producer and Director: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Production Manager: Preston Collins.
*Shot in Chicago, Illinois by an uncredited union crew.*

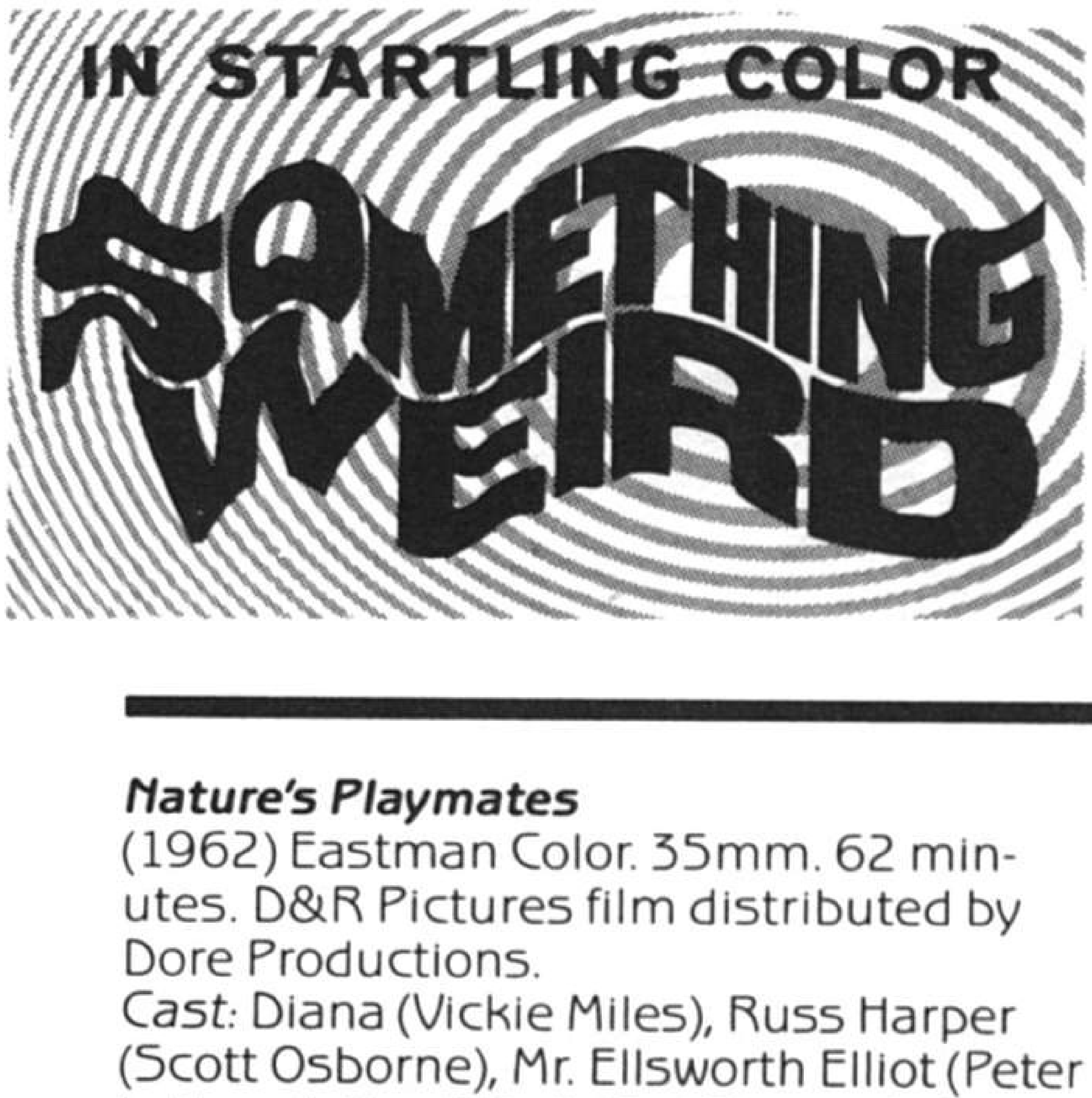
**The Adventures of Lucky Pierre**
(1961) Eastman Color. 35mm. Approx. 60 minutes.
*Cast:* Pierre (Billy Falbo), and Pierre's Playmates.
*Credits:* Director and Cinematographer: Herschell Gordon Lewis under the pseudonym Lewis H. Gordon. Producer and Sound Recordist: David Friedman under the pseudonym Davis Freeman.
*Shot in Chicago, Illinois.*

**Daughter of the Sun**
(1962) Eastman Color and Black & White. 35mm. Approximately 60 minutes.
*Cast:* Teacher (Rusty Allen), School Board Member (Jerome Eden, under the pseudonym Jerome Stallion).
*Credits:* Director and Cinematographer: Herschell Gordon Lewis under the pseudonym Lewis H. Gordon. Producer and Sound Recordist: David Friedman under the pseudonym Davis Freeman.
*Shot in Miami, Florida.*

1 ***Suburban Roulette*** **(1967).**


HOW LUCKY CAN A GUY GET?
How Lucky Can We All Get?
PIERRE THE GIRL EXAMINER
SEE HIM BARE HIDDEN ASSETS!!
DELIGHTFUL, DELECTABLE, DESIRABLE, DELICIOUS DAMSELS DEVOID of Any and All Inhibitions!
THE ADVENTURES OF
LUCKY PIERRE
FILMED IN FLESHTONE COLOR
And SKINAMASCOPE
Starring
BILLY FALBO
And PIERRE'S PLAYMATES
A Lucky Pierre Production
AD HOC ADVOCATED ADULT Amusement


A TASTE of BLOOD
IN SHOCKING COLOR!


IN STARTLING COLOR
SOMETHING WEIRD

***Nature's Playmates***

(1962) Eastman Color. 35mm. 62 minutes. D&R Pictures film distributed by Dore Productions.

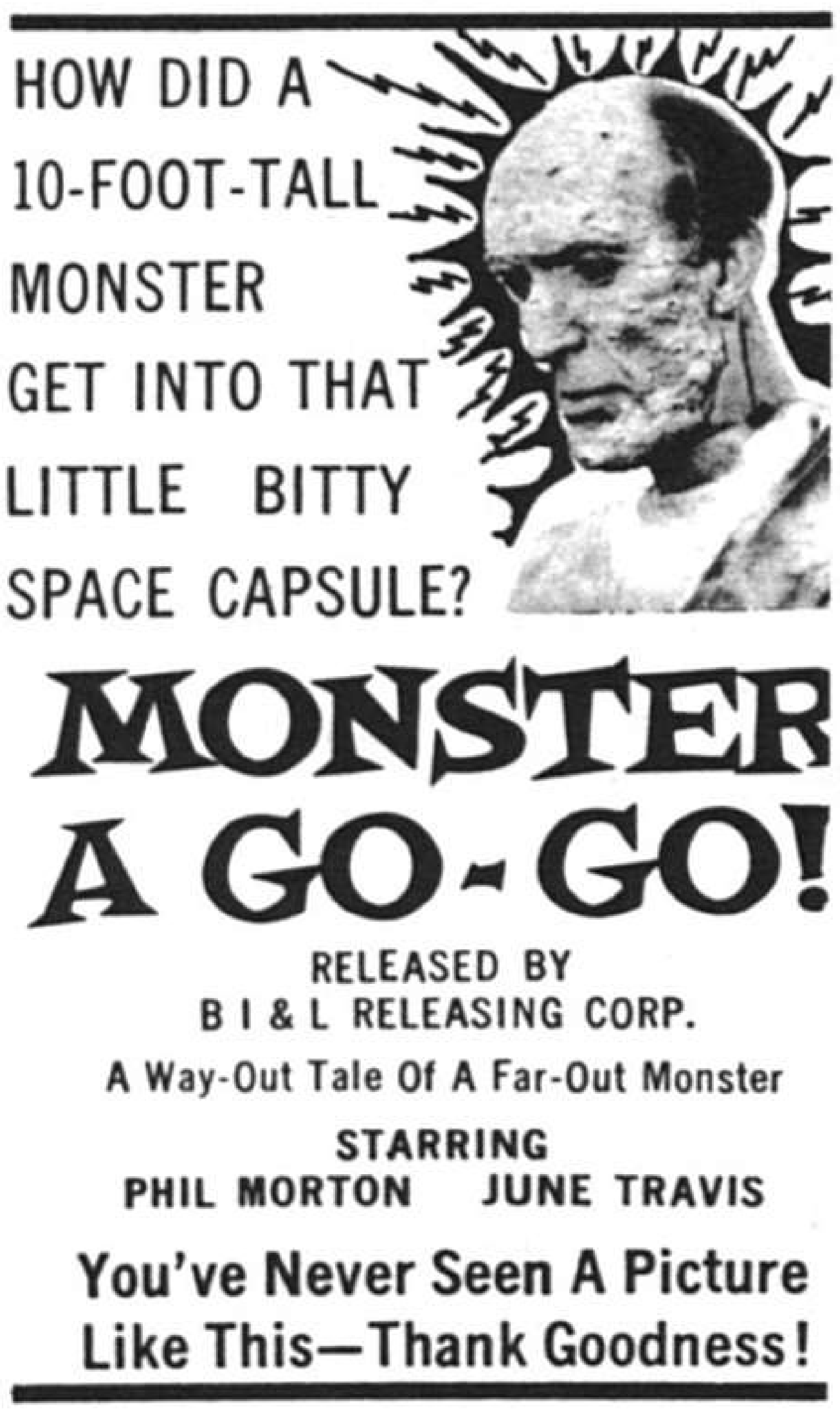
*Cast:* Diana (Vickie Miles), Russ Harper (Scott Osborne), Mr. Ellsworth Elliot (Peter Lathrop), Mrs. Elliott (Teri Stevens), Camp directors (Al Glick and Fred Gordon), with (Graig Maudslay, Jr., Warrene Gray, Ingrun Albert, Marsha Monnet, Elaine Roberts, Judy Parsons, Shirley Gresham, Doris Wisher, and Amy O'Donnell).

*Credits:* Producers: Thomas J. Dowd and Davis Freeman (David Friedman). Director: Lewis H. Gordon (Herschell Gordon Lewis). Screenplay: Bently Williams, Cameraman: William R. Johnson. Music: Lawrence W. Brady. Sound: Davis Mason (David Friedman). Technical director: Fred Gordon.

*Shot in Chicago, Illinois and Miami, Florida*

2 ***A Taste of Blood*** **(1967).**

3 ***Moonshine Mountain*** **(1964).**



HOW DID A 10-FOOT-TALL MONSTER GET INTO THAT LITTLE BITTY SPACE CAPSULE?

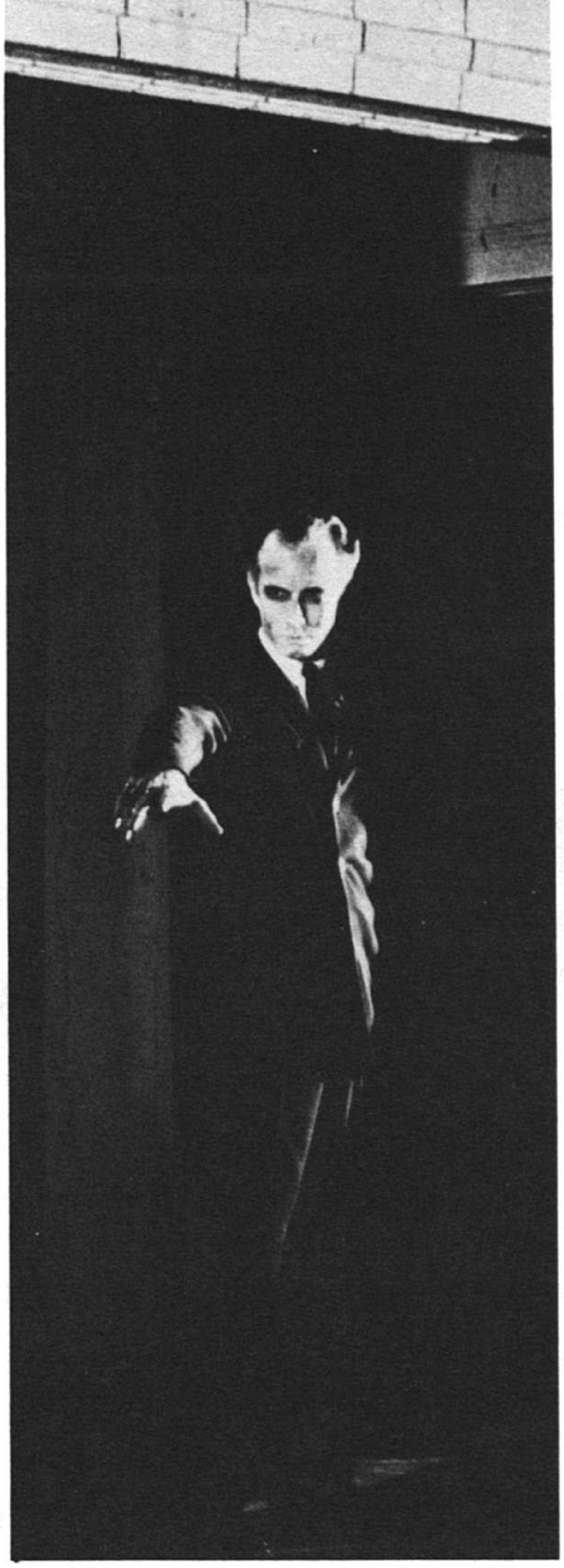
**MONSTER A GO-GO!**

RELEASED BY
B I & L RELEASING CORP.

A Way-Out Tale Of A Far-Out Monster

STARRING
PHIL MORTON JUNE TRAVIS

**You've Never Seen A Picture Like This—Thank Goodness!**



2

***BOIN-N-G***
(1963) Eastman Color. 35mm. 70 minutes. Distributed by Box Office Spectaculars.
*Cast:* Al Harding (Thomas Sweetwood), Bob Stevens (Bill Johnson), Francine (Vickie Miles), Audrey (Christina Castel), Schmurtz (Robbie Bee), Sonny Halitosis (Lawrence Wood), with (Marge London, Joanne Stuart and Marlene Gage).
*Credits:* Producer: Davis Freeman (David Friedman). Director: Lewis H. Gordon (Herschell Gordon Lewis). Screenplay: Davis Freeman and Lewis H. Gordon. Cameraman: Marvin Lester. Editorial supervisor: Valerie Hawthorne. Sound: Davis Mason (David Friedman), Production manager: William Kurbee. Assistant: Andy Romanoff.
*Shot in Barrington, Illinois.*

***Blood Feast***
(1963) Blood (Eastman) Color. 35mm. 75 minutes (Later cut to 58 minutes). Distributed by Box Office Spectaculars. A David F. Friedman—Herschell G. Lewis Production.
*Cast:* Pete Thornton (Thomas Wood), Fuad Ramses (Mal Arnold), Suzette (Connie Mason), Police Captain (Scott H. Hall), Mrs. Fremont (Lyn Bolton), Trudy (Toni Calvert), Tony (Gene Courtier), Girl on beach (Ashlyn Martin), Girl in apartment (Sandra Sinclair), High Priest (Jerome Eden), Dr. Flanders (Al Golden) and Truck driver (Craig Maudslay, Jr.).
*Credits:* Producers: David F. Friedman, Stanford S. Kohlberg, and Herschell Gordon Lewis. Director: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Screenplay: Allison Louise Downe. Cinematographer: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Film editors: Robert Sinise and Frank Romolo. Original music: Herschell G. Lewis. Sound recordist: David F. Friedman. Special effects: Herschell G. Lewis. Crew Chief: Harry Kerby. Chief electrician: Lorin D. Hall.
*Shot in Miami, Florida.*

***Goldilocks and the Three Bares***
*a.k.a.* ***Goldilocks' Three Chicks***
(1963) Eastman Color. 35mm. 70 Minutes. D&R Pictures film distributed by Dore Productions.
*Cast:* Alison Edwards (Vickie Miles), Eddie (Rex Marlow), Tommy (Thomas Sweetwood), Myrna (Netta Mallina), with (Joey Maxim, former world's light heavyweight champion, as himself, Craig Maudslay, Jr., Judy Parsons, Mal Arnold, Toni Toomey, Maria Stinger and Delores Mooney).
*Credits:* Producers: Thomas J. Dowd and Davis Freeman (David F. Friedman). Director: Lewis H. Gordon (Herschell Gordon Lewis). Cameraman: Marvin Lester. Music: Paul J. Gillette. Sound: Davis Mason (David F. Friedman).
Working title: *Singing in the Sun.*
*Shot in Miami, Florida.*

***Bell, Bare and Beautiful***
(1963) Eastman Color. 35mm. 64 minutes. Griffith Productions.
*Cast:* Gina (Virginia Bell), Rick (Thomas Sweetwood), Betty (Joy Hodges), Elsa (Sunny Dare), Barney (Dave Friedman), Dr. Everett (Al Golden), Roland (Roland Porter), Gangster (Harry Shurgin), Theatre manager (Leroy C. Griffith), Mickey (Ben Melton), Artist (Jerome Eden), Bellboy (Craig Maudslay, Jr.), Doctor (Huntington Hall), with (Cindy Craig, Sheryl Nichols, Barbara Taylor, Fraiah Payne, Joyce Lewis and Sandra Sinclair).
*Credits:* Producer: Davis Freeman (David F. Friedman). Executive producers: Leroy C. Griffith, Eli Jackson. Director: Lewis H. Gordon (Herschell Gordon Lewis). Screenplay: Leroy C. Griffith. Cinematographer: Lewis H. Gordon. Film editor: Carroll Wurkes. Music: L.W. Ellington (Larry Wellington). Sound: Davis Mason (David F. Friedman).
*Shot at Spartan's Tropical Gardens, Miami, Florida.*

***Scum of the Earth***
*a.k.a.* ***Devil's Camera***
(1963) Black & White. 35mm. 71 minutes Distributed by Box Office Spectaculars.
*Cast:* Kim (Vickie Miles), Harmon (Thomas Sweetwood), Sandy (Sandra Sinclair), Lang (Lawrence Wood), Larry (Mal Arnold), Ajax (Craig Maudslay, Jr.), Mr. Sherwood (Edward Mann), and Marie (Toni Calvert).
*Credits:* Producer: Davis Freeman (David F. Friedman). Director: Lewis H. Gordon (Herschell Gordon Lewis). Cameraman: Marvin Lester. Film editor: Patrick Murphy Music: Manuel Ortiz. Sound: Davis Mason (David F. Friedman).

### *2000 Maniacs*

(1964) Eastman Color. 35mm. 88 minutes. A Friedman-Lewis Production distributed by Box Office Spectaculars, Inc.
*Cast:* Terry Adams (Connie Mason), Tom White (Thomas Wood), Mayor Buckman (Jeffrey Allen), Lester (Ben Moore), Bea Miller (Shelby Livingston), Rufe (Gary Bakeman), John Miller (Jerome Eden), David Wells (Michael Korb), Beverly Wells (Yvonne Gilbert), Harper (Mark Douglas), Betsy (Linda Cochran), Billy (Vincent Santo), Policeman (Andy Wilson), and The Pleasant Valley Boys as themselves.
*Credits:* Producer: David F. Friedman. Director and Photographer: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Original story and screenplay: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Production designer: David F. Friedman. Unit manager: Jerome Eden. Original music: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Musical arranger: Larry Wellington. Music conductor: Chuck Scott. Production manager: Andy Romanoff. Sound recordist: David F. Friedman. Crew Chief: Harry Kerbin. Film editor: Robert Sinise. Production Assistant: David Guilbert. Script Supervisor: Gretchen Blank.
*Filmed in St. Cloud, Florida.*

### *Moonshine Mountain*

(1964) Eastman Color. 35mm. 90 minutes. A Herschell Gordon Lewis Production.
*Cast:* Doug Martin (Chuck Scott, a.k.a. Charles Glore), Asa Potter (Adam Sorg), Jeb Carpenter (Jeffrey Allen), Laura Carpenter (Bonnie Hinson), Angeline (Carmen Sotir), Raf (Ben Moore), Hutto (Pat Patterson), Ed Basham (Mark Douglas), Ma Basham (Karin March), Mary Lou (Gretchen Eisner), Luther (Harry Hoffman), Zero (Bill Simpson), Harley (William Harris), Della Lawrence (Marilyn Walters), Wilson (Harry Kerr), Bentley (Lee Collins), TV announcer (Claude Casey), TV singer (James Preddy), Electrician (James Stokes, Jr.), and The Catalinas, Gay Land and The Thunderbirds, and The Sweet Gum Sisters and Brother as themselves.
*Credits:* Producer and Director: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Screenplay: Charles Glore. Cinematographer: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Production manager: Andy Romanoff. Assistant director: J.G. Patterson, Jr. Crew Chief: Bob Vercruse. Film editors: Robert Sinise and Ron Clasky.
*Filmed in Bullock Creek and Rock City, South Carolina.*

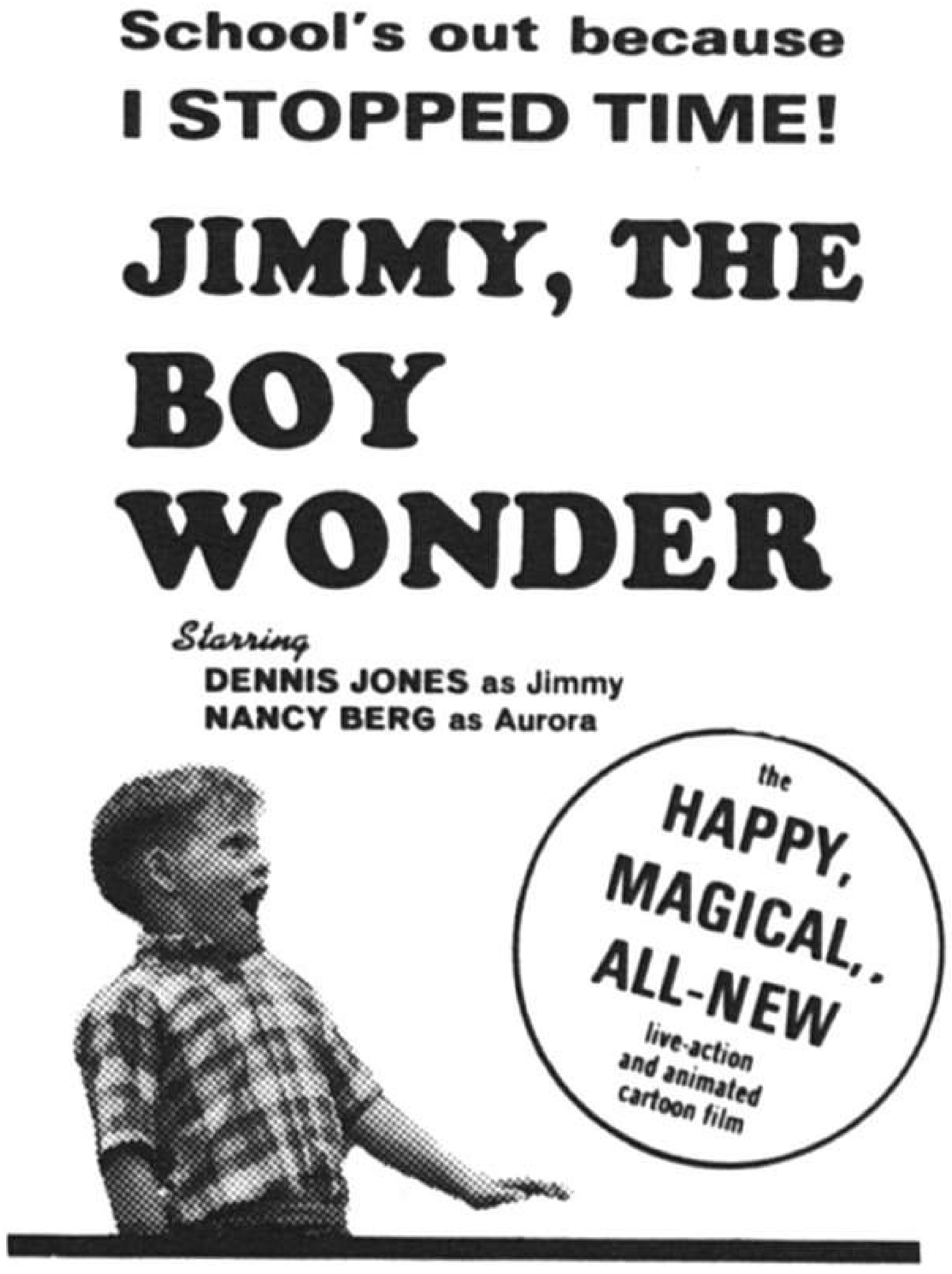
### *Color Me Blood Red*

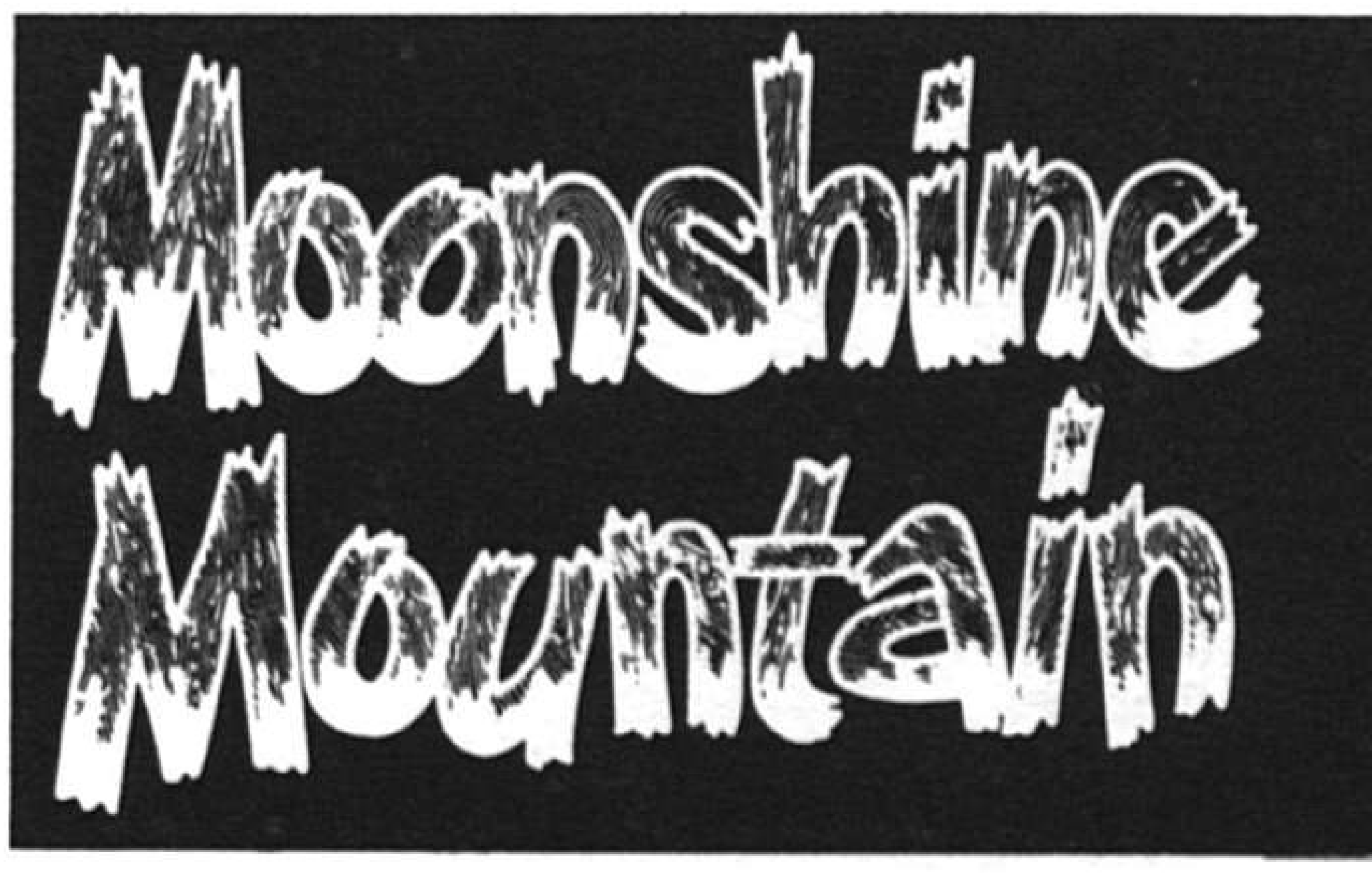
(1965) Eastman Color. 35mm. 74 minutes. A Friedman-Lewis, Box Office Spectaculars Production distributed by Jacqueline Kay, Inc.
*Cast:* Adam Sorg (Don Joseph), April (Candi Conder), Gigi (Elyn Warner), Farnsworth (Scott H. Hall), Rolf (Jerome Eden), Sydney (Patricia Lee), Jack (James Jackel), Mrs. Carter (Iris Marshall), Gregorovich (William Harris), and Mitzi (Cathy Collins).
*Credits:* Producer: David F. Friedman. Director and Writer: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Cinematographer: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Assistant cameraman: Andy Romanoff. Film editor: Robert Sinise. Sound recordist: David F. Friedman. Crew Chief: Lorin D. Hall. Original paintings: Chuck Scott (Charles Glore) and Dave Seidel.
*Filmed in Sarasota, Florida.*

3

### *Monster A Go-Go*
### a.k.a. *Terror at Halfday*

(1965) Black & White. 35mm. 70 minutes. Distributed by BI&L Releasing Corporation.
*Cast:* (Phil Morton, June Travis, George Perry, Lois Brooks and others), and The Monster (Henry Hite).
*Credits:* Producer and Director: Sheldon Seymour (Herschell Gordon Lewis) and Bill Rebane. Title song: Libby Quinn.
*Filmed in Chicago, Illinois and Environs.*





### *Sin, Suffer, and Repent*

(1965) 35mm.
British roadshow picture on the perils of venereal disease re-worked by Lewis as a vehicle for showing the birth of a baby on screen. Additional scenes produced and directed by Herschell Gordon Lewis. No cast or other credits available.
*Additional scenes shot in Chicago, Illinois.*

### *Jimmy, the Boy Wonder*

(1966) Color. 35mm. 70 minutes. A Cinemation Pictures, Inc. production released by Mayflower Pictures, Inc.
*Cast:* Aurora (Nancy Berg), and Jimmy (Dennis Jones).
*Credits:* Producer: Hal Berg. Director: Herschell Gordon Lewis.
Part live-action, part animated cartoon.
*Filmed in Chicago, Illinois.*

4

5

**Alley Tramp**
(1966) Black & White. 35mm. 75 minutes. Released by United Pictures Organization.
*Cast:* (All pseudonyms: Anette Courset, Jean Lamoc, Lisa Bourdon, Marie Delmonde, Lamone Baima, Anette Souvet, and Jacque Sette), Marie (Julie Ames), Phillip (Steve White), Mother (Ann Heath), Father (Jack Horner), and Stranger, mother's lover (Roy Collodi).
*Credits:* Director: Armand Parys (Herschell Gordon Lewis). Producer Leon Thirard (Tom Dowd). Screenplay: Paul Gordone (Allison Louise Downe). Original story: Jean Michel (Tom Dowd). Cinematography: Georges Parades (Herschell Gordon Lewis). Art director: Gerard Bussieres (?). 2nd unit director: Ramon Delamare (?). 2nd unit camera: Gaston Palau (Eskandar "Alex" Ameripoor). 2nd unit set designer: Rosinne Barillet (?).
*Shot in Chicago, Illinois.*

**An Eye for an Eye**
(1966) Color. 35mm. Approx. 80-90 minutes. A Creative Film Enterprises Production.
*Cast:* Thomas Wood, a.k.a. Bill Kerwin; Otto Schlesinger: Paul Hunter and others.
*Credits:* Producer and Director: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Executive producer: Sidney J. Reich.
Perhaps never released.
*Shot in Chicago, Illinois.*

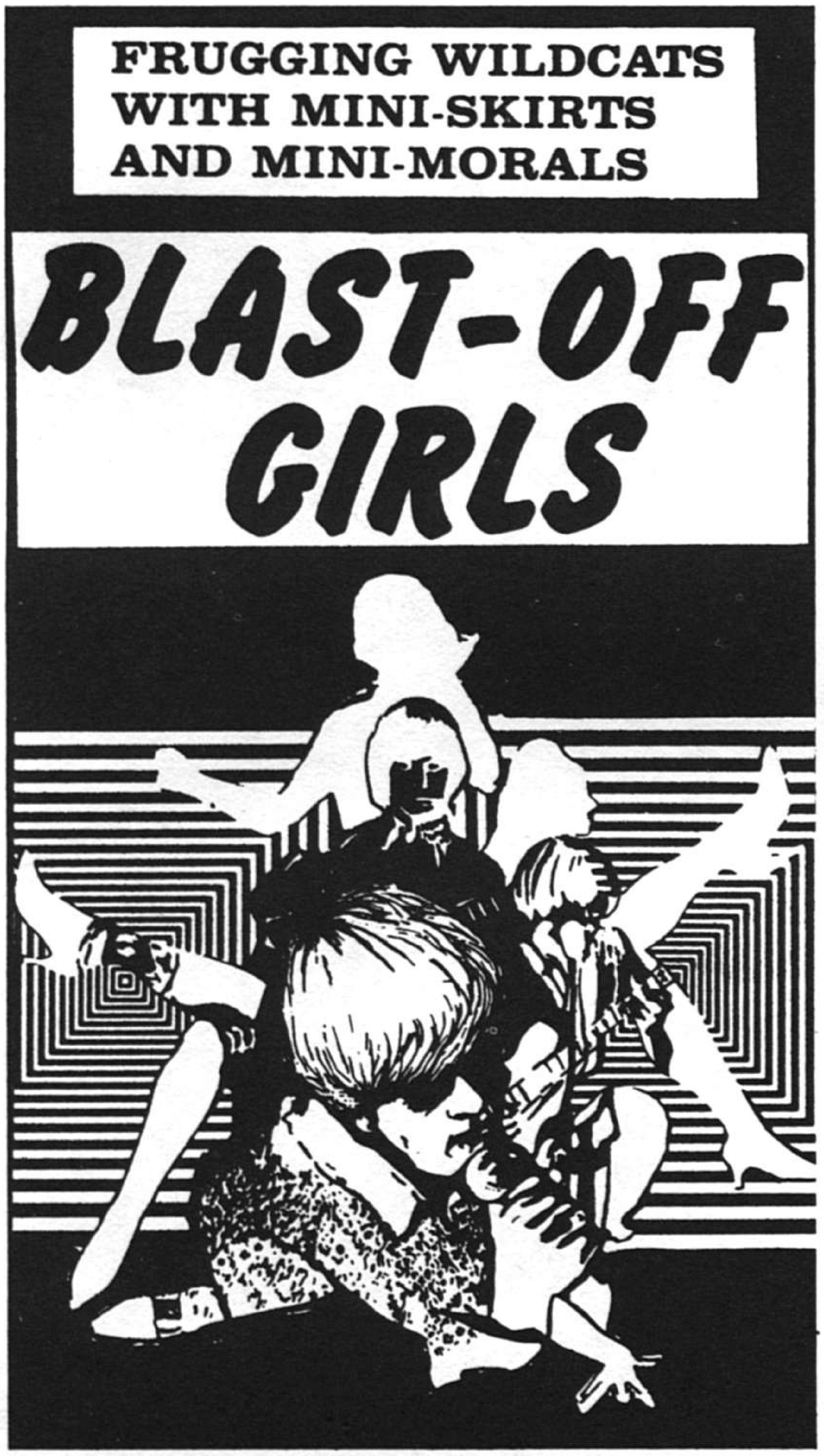
**(Santa Visits) The Magic Land of Mother Goose**
(1967) Color. 35mm. 60 minutes.
*Cast:* No information available.
*Credits:* Producer: J. Edwin Baker. Director and cinematographer: Herschell Gordon Lewis.

**Suburban Roulette**
(1967) color. 35mm. 83 minutes. Released by Argent Film Productions, Inc.
*Cast:* Ilene Fisher (Elizabeth Wilkinson), Bert Fisher (Ben Moore), Fran Conley (Ione Rolnick), Margo Elston (Vickie Miles), Ron Elston (Tony McCabe), and Martin Conley (Thomas Wood).
*Credits:* Producer: David Chudnow. Director: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Screenplay: James Thomas. Photography: Roy Collidi.
*Shot in Chicago, Illinois and suburbs.*

**Something Weird**
(1967) Color. 35mm. 83 minutes. A HURLEW Productions, Inc. Picture released by Mayflower Pictures, Inc.
*Cast:* Cronin Mitchell (Tony McCabe), Ellen Parker, the beautiful/ugly witch (Elizabeth Lee), Dr. Alex Jordan (William Brooker), and (Mudite Arums, Ted Heil, Lawrence J. Aberwood, Stan Dale, and Ione).
*Credits:* Writer and producer: James F. Hurley. Director and cinematographer: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Crew Chief and stuntman: Bobby Vercruse. Assistant cameraman: Andy Romanoff.
*Shot in Chicago, Illinois.*

**A Taste of Blood**
(1967) Color. 35mm. 120 minutes. A Creative Film Enterprises, Inc. Production.
*Cast:* John Stone (Bill Rogers), Helene Stone (Elizabeth Wilkinson), Dr. Hank Tyson (Thomas Wood, a.k.a. Bill Kerwin), Dr. Howard Helsing (Otto Schlesinger), Hester (Eleanor Vaill), Detective Crane (Lawrence Tobin), Lord Gold (Ted Schell), Seaman (Herschell Gordon Lewis, a.k.a. Sheldon Seymour), Sherri Morris (Dolores Carlos), Lawyer (Sidney Jay, a.k.a. Sidney J. Reich), and Vivacious Vivian (Gail Janis).
*Credits:* Executive producer: Sidney J. Reich. Producer and director: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Original screenplay: Donald Stanford. Assistant director: Allison Louise Downe. Assistant to the producer: L.G. Patterson, Jr. Production manager: William Kerwin. Crew Chief: Roy Collodi. Camera operator: Andy Romanoff. Sound recordist: Alan Tadie. Editorial supervisor: Richard Brinkman. Musical director: Larry Wellington.
*Filmed in Miami, Florida.*

**The Gruesome Twosome**
(1967) Color. 35mm. 72 minutes. A Mayflower Pictures, Inc. release.
*Cast:* The Mother (Elizabeth Davis), her Son (Chris Martel), Heroine (Gretchen Welles), her Boyfriend (Rodney Bedell).
*Credits: Producer and director: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Executive Producer: Fred M. Sandy. Screenplay: Allison Louise Downe. Music scorer: Larry Wellington.*



4 *The Gruesome Twosome* (1967).

5 *A Taste of Blood* (1967).

6 *The Girl, The Body, and The Pill* (1967).

6

***The Girl, the Body, and the Pill***
(1967 color. 35mm. 80 minutes. A Creative Film Enterprises, Inc. Production. *Cast:* Marcia Barrington (Pamela Rhea), Wesley Nichols (Bill Rogers), Irene Hunt (Valedia Hill), Randy Hunt (Nancy Lee Noble), Mr. Price (Otto Schlesinger), Pike Grover (Roy Collodi), Brad Martin (George Brown), Grace Nichols (Eleanor Vaill), Ray Stanton (James Nelson), Alice Nichols (Kay Ross), Charlie (Todd Harris), Nancy Foster (Sue Puccinelli), Freddy (Pat Tenerelli), Tony (Ray Sager) and The Fly-By-Nytes as themselves.
*Credits:* Producer and director: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Executive producer: Sidney J. Reich. Original screenplay: Allison Louise Downe. Production manager: Paul Hunter. Editorial supervisor: Richard Brinkman. Editorial assistant: Robert Lewis. Cinematographer: Roy Collodi. Camera operator: Steve Poster. Set designer: Robert Enrietto. Art director: Dean Alexander. Chief electrician: Cornelius Smith. Sound recordist: William R. Johnson. Musical director: Larry Wellington. Song, "The Pill": Sheldon Seymour, a.k.a. Herschell Gordon Lewis. Crew Chief: Spiros Hortis. Second unit: Eskander "Alex" Ameripoor.
*Filmed in Chicago, Illinois.*

***Blast-Off Girls***
(1967) color. 35mm. 85 minutes. A Creative Film Enterprises, Inc. Production. *Cast:* Boojie Baker (Dan Conway), Gordie (Ray Sager), "The Big Blast" ("The Faded Blue," Tom Tyrell, Ron Liace, Dennis Hickey, Chris Wolski, Ralph Mullin), "Charlie" (Steve White, Tom Eppolito, Bob Compton, Ray Barry, Tony Sorci), Marty Dunne (Lawrence J. Aberwood), Michael Black (Don Logay), Lieutenant Kronski (Paul Hunter), Mr. Roswell (Jack Horner), The Blast-Off Girls: Kim (Sherri Lane), Maxine (Sharon Camille), Harriet (Ann Heath), Sally (Vicki Tenerrelli), Barbara (Julia Ames), Laurie (Sarasue Gleiss), and Angel (Barbara Harrison), and a special guest appearance by Col. Harland Sanders.
*Credits:* Producer and director: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Executive producer: Sidney J. Reich. Assistant director: Allison Louise Downe. Production manager: Paul Hunter. Original screenplay: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Production coordinator: Robert Enrietto. Crew Chief: Dean Alexander. Cameraman: Roy Collodi. 2nd unit cameraman: Steve Poster. Lighting engineer: Cornelius Smith. Production assistant: Spyros Hortis. Assistant to the producer: Alex Ameripoor. Still photographer: Leonard Pretto. Sound: William R. Johnson. Sound assistant: James Nelson.
*Filmed in Chicago, Illinois.*

7

**She-Devils on Wheels**
(1968) Color. 35mm. 83 minutes. A Mayflower Pictures, Inc. Production.
*Cast:* Queen (Betty Connell), Whitey (Pat Poston), Honey-Pot (Nancy Lee Noble), Karen (Christie Wagner), Ted (Rodney Bedell), Terry (Ruby Teusday), Russian (Joani Kramer), Supergirl (Laura Platz), Joe-Boy (John Weymer), Doodie (Steve White), Bartender (Roy Collodi), Outlaw (Rick Williams), Mac (Donna Stelzer), and Police (John Shackleford and John Chaffin).
*Credits:* Producer and director: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Executive producer: Fred M. Sandy. Original screenplay: Allison Louise Down. Editorial supervisor: Richard C. Brinkman. Camera operator: Roy Collodi. Assistant to the producer: J.G. Patterson, Jr. Background music: Larry Wellington. Song, "Get Off The Road," words: Sheldon Seymour, a.k.a. Herschell Gordon Lewis, music: Robert Lewis. Sound recordist: Spyridon Horiatis. 2nd unit cameraman: Eskandar Ameripoor. Set designer: Robert Enrietto.
*Filmed in and around Miami, Florida.*

**Just for the Hell of It**
(1968) Color. 35mm. 86 minutes. An Argent Film Productions, Inc. picture released by Unusual Films International.
*Cast:* Doug (Rodney Bedell), Dexter (Ray Sager), Bitsy (Nancy Lee Noble), Jeanne (Agi Gynes), Denny (Steve White), Lummox (Ralph Mullin), Cransy (Larry Williams), Lt. Sanders (A.V. Dreeson), Police Chief (A.H. Dreeson, Sr.), woman in park (Geraldine Young), Teenyboppers (Toni Newsholme, Julie Ames, Andrea Barr) and Policemen (John Shackleford and John Chaffin).
*Credits:* Producer and director: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Executive producer: David Chudnow. Original screenplay: Allison Louise Downe. Production manager: J.G. Patterson, Jr. Editorial supervisor: Richard C. Brinkman. Camera operator: Roy Collodi. Background music: Larry Wellington. Song, "Destruction, Inc.!" words: Sheldon Seymour, a.k.a. Herschell Gordon Lewis; music: Robert Lewis; singer: Tary Rebenar. Sound recordist: Spyridon Horiatis. 2nd unit cameraman: Eskandar Ameripoor. Set designer: Robert Enrietto.
*Filmed in and around Miami, Florida.*

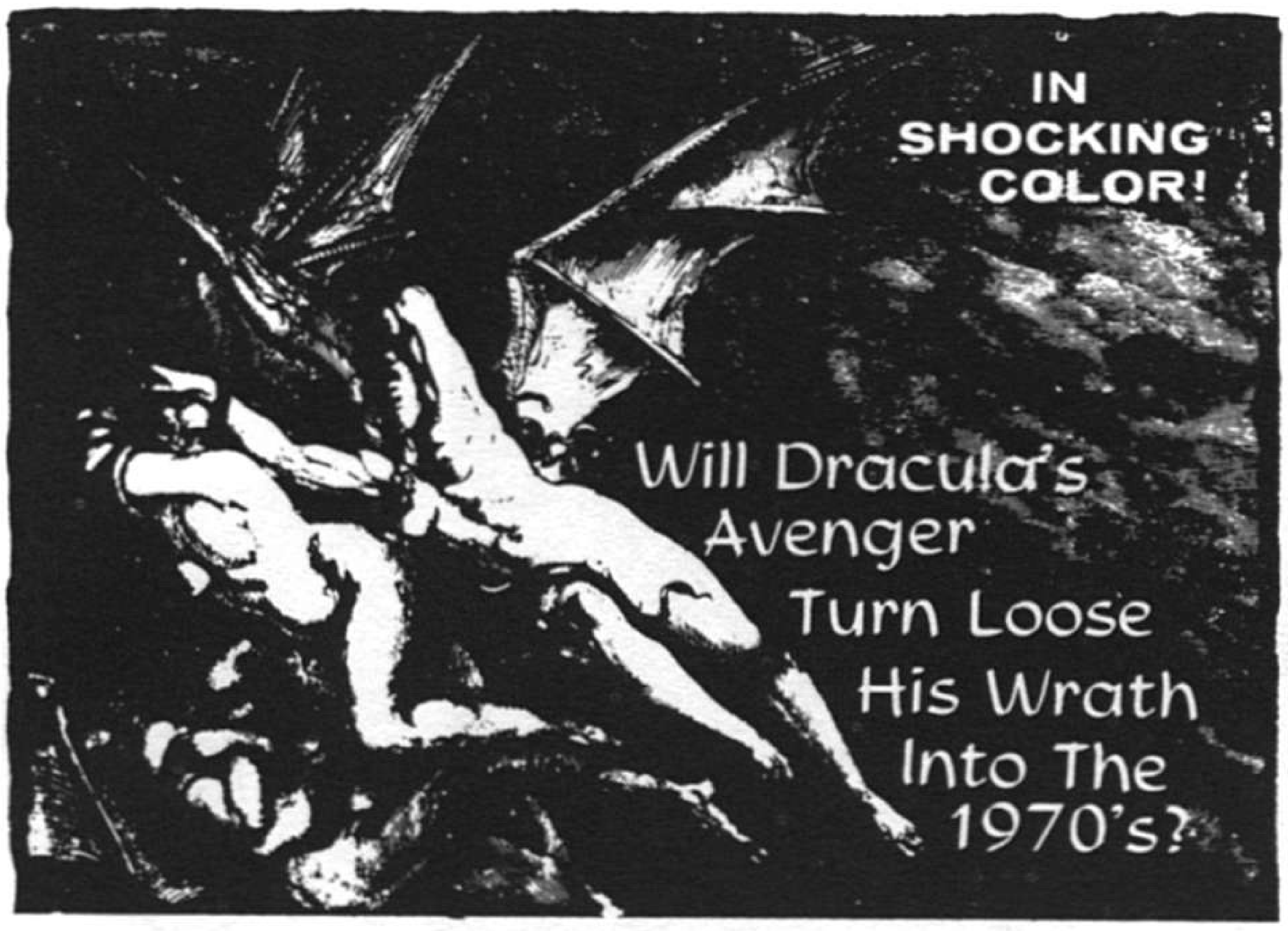
**How to Make a Doll**
*a.k.a.* ***How to Love a Doll***
(1968) Color. 35mm. 81 minutes. An Argent Film Productions, Inc. picture released by Unusual Films International.
*Cast:* Percy Corley (Robert Wood), Dr. Hamilcar West (Jim Vance), Agnes Turnbull—Percy's dream girl (Bobbi West), Dr. West's dream girl (Margie Lester), Mrs. Corley (Elizabeth Davis), Mrs. Turnbull (Geraldine Young), Mr. Turnbull (Brett Jason Merriman), Computer girl #1 (Delores Johnson), Computer girl #2 (Shelley Houston), Computer girl #3 (June Marie), Computer girl #4 (Mary Robbins), and Computer reject (Paul Jensen).
*Credits:* Producer and director: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Executive producer: David Chudnow. Original screenplay: Bert Ray

7 ***How to Make a Doll*** **(1968).**

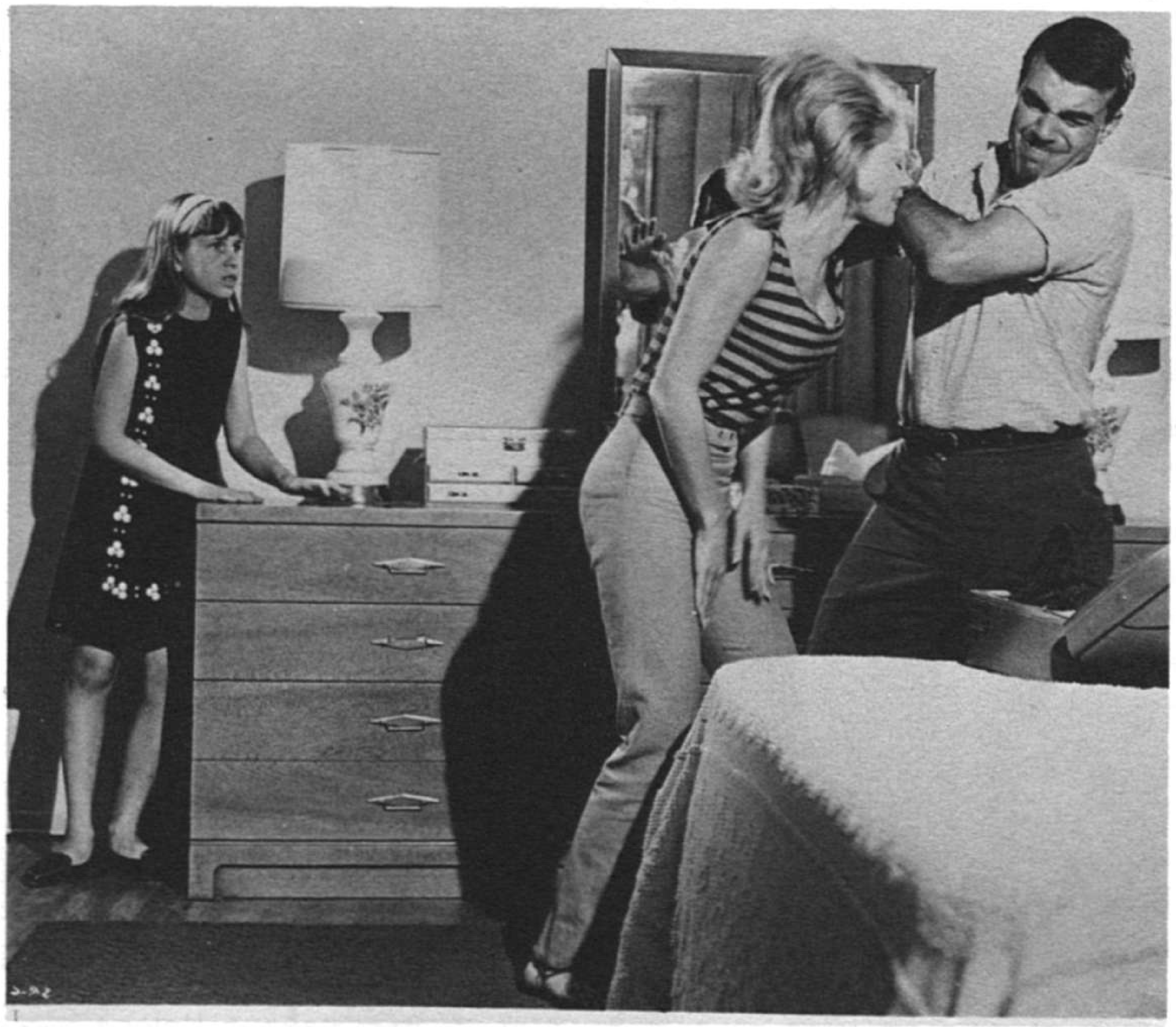
8 ***Suburban Roulette*** **(1967).**

9 ***She-Devils on Wheels*** **(1968).**

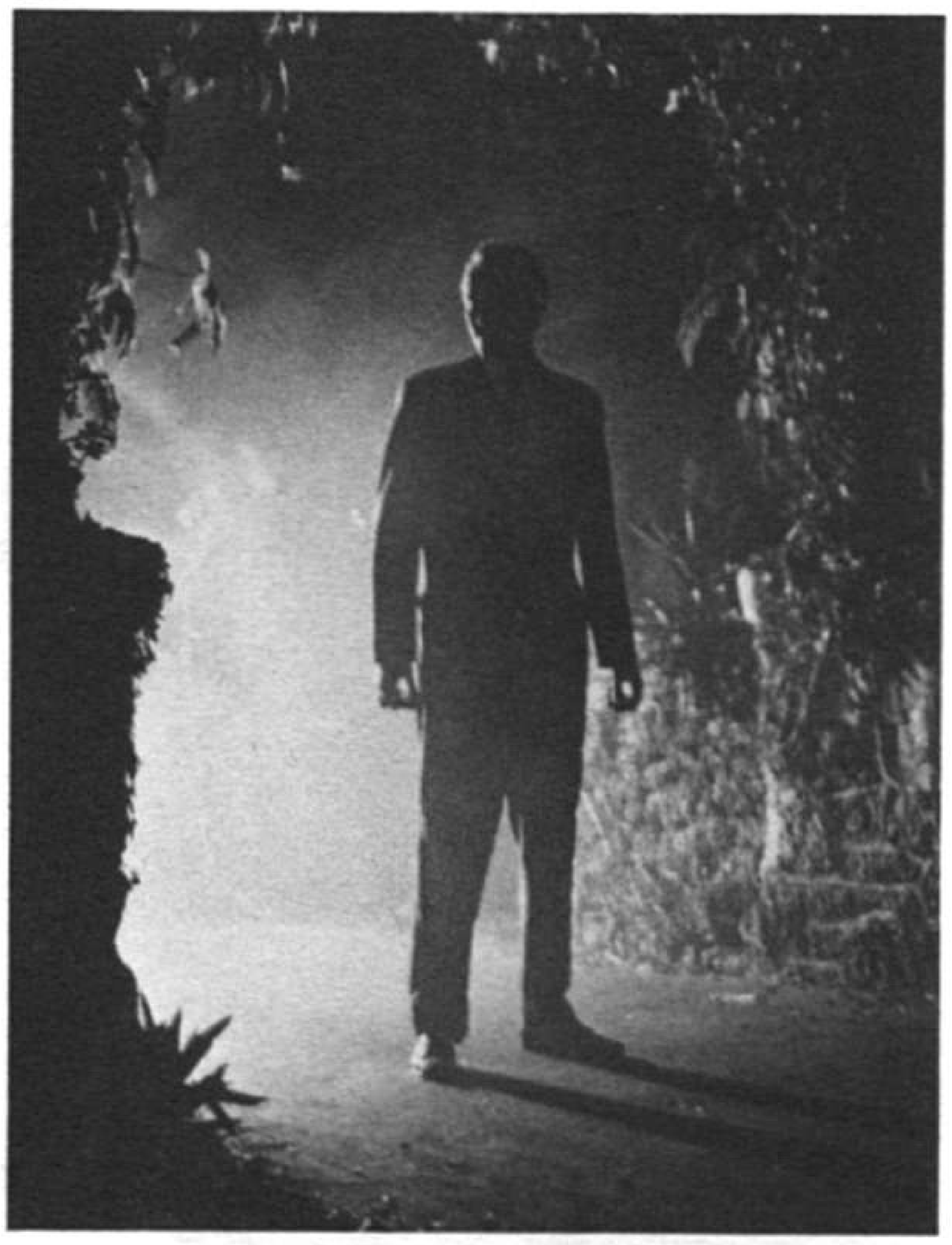
10 ***A Taste of Blood*** **(1967).**


IN SHOCKING COLOR!
Will Dracula's Avenger Turn Loose His Wrath Into The 1970's?

8



10



9

and Sheldon Seymour, a.k.a. Herschell Gordon Lewis. Editorial supervisor: Richard Brinkman. Camera operator: Roy Collodi. 2nd unit camera: Eskandar Ameripoor. Set designer: Spyridon Horiatis. Associate editor: Ralph Mullin. Background music: Larry Wellington. Special computer sound: Sheldon Seymour, a.k.a. Herschell Gordon Lewis. Assistant director: Allison Louise Downe. Production manager: J.G. Patterson, Jr. Crew Chief: Paul Jensen. Assistant to the production manager: Steve White. *Filmed in Miami, Florida.*

***The Psychic***
a.k.a. **Copenhagen's Psychic Loves** (1968) Color. 35mm. 90 minutes. A Hurlon Productins, Inc. presentation. Cast: *Dan Thomas (Dick Genola), Ellen Thomas (Robyn Guest), Henry Kalder (Jack Horner), Lieutenant Anders (Fred Michaels), Valerie Parker (Carol Saenz), Mr. Doucette (Jim Small), Bobbi (Bobbi*

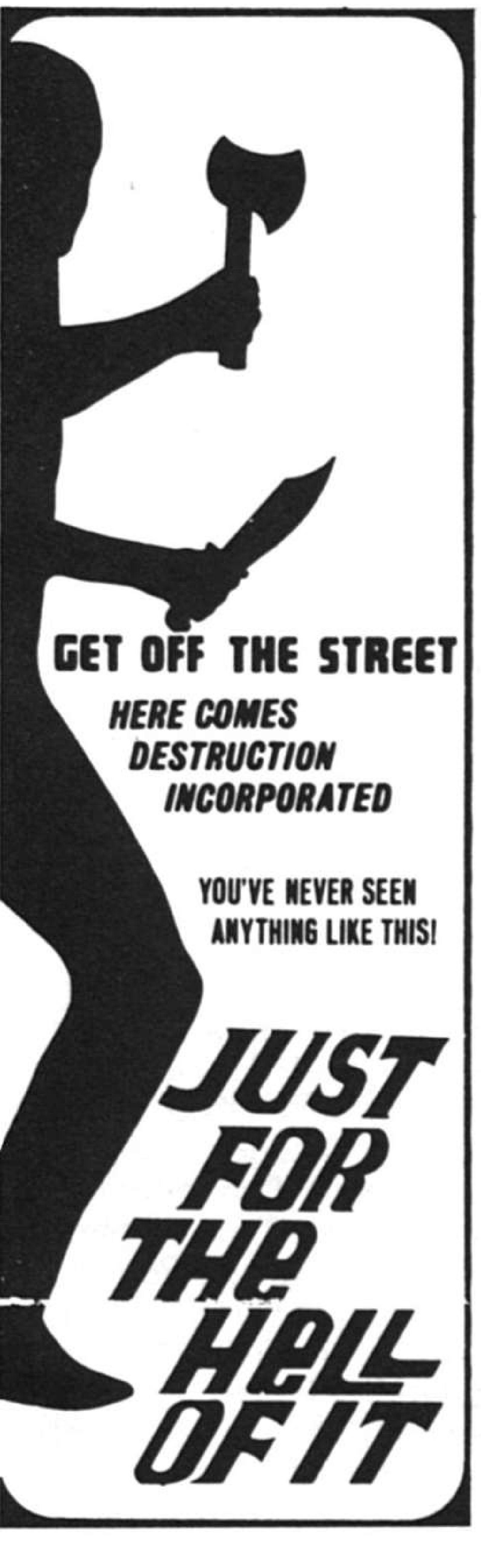
11 ***The Gruesome Twosome* (1967).**

11

*Spencer), Professor Roxen (Larry Wellington), Jerry Larson (Dave Whitaker), Felicia Kalder (Sandie Wolsfeld), Alice Morgan (Arlene Banas), Girl in lounge (Elaine Blake), Artie Wilson (Darrold Busse), Man in playground (George Brown), Jeff Kalder (Kevin Miles), Lisa Thomas (Rhonda Reed), Master of ceremonies (Rafael), Dr. Stuart (Frank Josephs), and John Wilson (Robert Tolman).*
*Credits:* Producer and director: James F. Hurley. Director of cinematography: Herchell Gordon Lewis. Film editor: Richard Brinkman. Assistant editor: Eskandar Ameripoor. Assistants to the producer: Lee Ahsmann, Scott Carlson. Stan Kutin, Cathleen Parkes, Hal Ripley. Assistant director: Allison Louise Downe. Sound recordists: Daniel Krogh and Robert Lewis. Assistant cameraman: Alex Ameripoor. Hair stylist: Jack Mastro. Screenplay: James F. Hurley. Music composer and conductor Vincent Oddo. Music performers: The Wynston Symphonia. Theme song singer: Bobby Harrison.
*Filmed in and around Chicago, Illinois.*

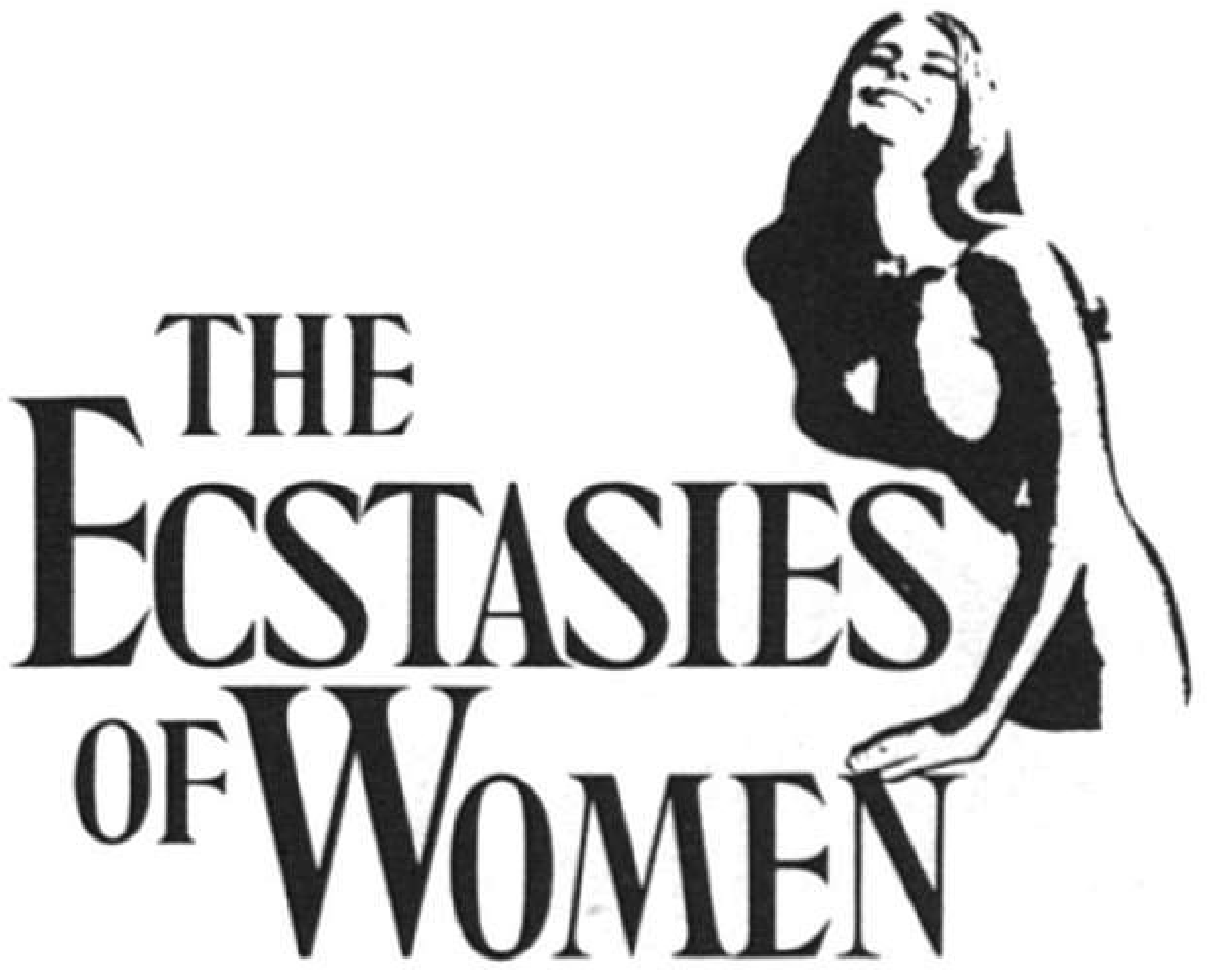
***The Ecstasies of Women***
(1969) Color. 35mm. 80 minutes. Released by United Pictures Organization.
*Cast:* Harry (Walter Camp), Summer (Bonnie Clark), Philomena (Sharon Matt), Annette (Jeanette Mills), Chris (Dee Howard), Sandy (Vincene Wallis), Freddie (Antoinette Maynard), Kitty (Eleanor Riggs), Gene (Forman Shain), Ted (William Vickers), and Fred (James Brand).
*Credits:* Producer: J.H. Wells (Thomas J. Dowd), Director: Mark Hansen (Herschell Gordon Lewis). Assistant director: Richard Kanter. Director of cinematography: Lewis H. Gordon (Herschell Gordon Lewis). Production manager: Buck Buckalew. Camera operator: Eskandar Ameripoor. Editorial supervisor: Sam J. Kopetzky. Musical backgrounds: William Allen. Sound: Robert Casey. Chief electrician: Ron Forman. Talent coordinator: Dorothy Kristman. Makeup: Helene Robbins. Props: Hollywood designers. Studio: Crescent Studios. Lab: Berkey-Pathe, Hollywood, California.
Filmed in Hollywood, California.

***Linda and Abilene***
(1969) Color. 35mm. 93 minutes. Released by United Pictures Organization.
*Cast:* Abilene (Sharon Matt), Linda (Roxanne Jones), Tod (Kip Marsh), Rawhide (Tom Thorn), Bartender (William Varris), Bar girl (Audrey Cromm), Preacher (Herbert Townsend, a.k.a. Buck Buckalew), and Cowboy (Bob Derne).
*Credits:* Producer: J.H. Wells (Thomas J. Dowd), Director: Mark Hansen (Herschell Gordon Lewis). Assistant director: John Goldman. Director of cinematography: Lewis H. Gordon (Herschell Gordon Lewis). Production manager: Buck Buckalew. Camera operator: Eskandar Ameripoor. Editorial supervisor: Richard C. Dynes (Richard C. Brinkman). Film editor: Alex


GET OFF THE STREET
HERE COMES
DESTRUCTION
INCORPORATED
YOU'VE NEVER SEEN
ANYTHING LIKE THIS!
JUST
FOR
THE
HELL
OF IT

12

12 **Linda and Abilene (1969).**


THE
ECSTASIES
OF WOMEN

Ameri (Eskandar Ameripoor). Musical backgrounds: Warren Regan (Larry Wellington). Sound engineer: Dan Krogh. Chief electrician: Larry Marcus. Talent coordinator: Pam Eddy. Makeup: Helene Robins. Props: Hollywood designers. Studio: Crescent Studios. Locations: Spahn's Movie Ranch. Lab: Berkey-Pathe, Hollywood, California.
*Filmed in Hollywood, California.*

**Miss Nymphet's Zap-In**
(1970) color. 35mm. 76 minutes. A Creative Film Enterprises, Inc production released by Mayflower Pictures, Inc.
*Cast: Dixie Donovan, Tony Mark, Cristine Murray, Ed Pawlin, Sonora, Mij Shippen, Jessica Leland, Phyllis Stangel, Wendy Winders, Sonald South, Cathy Adams, Sonny Seymour, Elsie Wine, Ed Kelly, Michael Cheal, Astrid Stellar, Fern Tom, Robin Courtney, Tai Hamilton, Sylvia Sark, Tom Rogers, Alex Eliot, Donna Bradley, Bub Bogan, Mary Jane Shippen, Tony*

13 ***The Gore-Gore Girls* (1972).**
14 ***A Taste of Blood* (1967).**

Year Of
The Yahoo!

13

*The Most BLOODCURDLING Motion Picture of All Time!*

A GHASTLY TALE DRENCHED WITH GOUTS OF BLOOD SPURTING FROM THE WRITHING VICTIMS OF A MADMAN'S LUST!

Halavah, Debbie Osborne, and Paula Renault.
*Credits:* Producer and director: Sheldon Seymour (Herschell Gordon Lewis). Director of cinematography: William R. Johnson. Camera operator: Alex Ameripoor. Editorial supervisor: Peter Guilfhoyle (Eskandar Ameripoor). Musical Coordinator: Larry Wellington. Original Music: Robert Lewis. Musical backgrounds: The Zaps. Sound engineer: Pat Dray. Production manager: Bethel Buckalew. Unit manager: Dick Ozmun. Production coordinator: Pam Eddy. Chief electrician: Jim Andrian.
*Filmed in Hollywood, California.*

***The Wizard of Gore***
(1970) Color. 35mm. 96 minutes. Released by Mayflower Pictures, Inc.
*Cast:* Montag (Ray Sager), Sherry Carson (Judy Cler), Jack (Wayne Ratay), Greg (Phil Laurenson), Steve (Jim Rau), Harlan (John Elliot), Kramer (Don Alexander), 1st Girl (Monika Blackwell), 2nd Girl (Corinne Kirkin), 3rd Girl (Karin Alexana), 4th Girl (Sally Brody), 5th Girl (Karen Burke), Maitre d'Hotel (Jack Gilbreth), and Man on stage (Ali Ameri, a.k.a. Eskandar Ameripoor).
*Credits:* Producer and director: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Executive producer: Fred M. Sandy. Original screenplay: Allen Kahn. Assistant director: Allison Louise Downe. Production manager: John Sezonov. Musical backgrounds: Larry Wellington. 1st Camera operator: Alex Ameripoor. 2nd Camera operator: Daniel Krogh. Production coordinator: Harry Ambroz. Sound recordist: Robert Lewis. Film editor: Eskandar Ameripoor. Editorial assistants: Ray Szegho (Ray Sager) and Dan Krogh. Makeup and hair stylist: Frank Morelli. Color lighting coordinator: William S. Stein, Jr. Unit Manager: Gary Isaacson. Technical Design unit chief: Roger Strauss. Property communications: Barry Lewis. Property construction: Dennis Matt. Still photographer: Roger Gee. Special "gore" effects: Herschell Gordon Lewis, Allison Louise Downe, and Robert Lewis. Fire effects: Daniel Krogh.
*Filmed in Chicago, Illinois and a Wisconsin T.V. station.*

***This Stuff'll Kill Ya!***
(1971) Color. 35mm. 100 minutes. An Ultima Productions, Inc. presentation.
*Cast: Roscoe Boone (Jeffrey Allen), Clark (Tim Holt), Elsie (Gloria King), Grady (Ray Sager), Sam (Erich Bradly), Carter (Terence McCarthy), Lynn (Ronna Riddle), Bubba (Larry Drake), Turnip (John Garner), Policeman (Bill Mays), Zeke (Lee Danser), Maryellen (Pamela Polsgrove), Beau (Doffy Candler), Lawyer Grimes (Skip Nicholson), Bubba's nurse (Carol Merrell), Marcia (Pamela Bloomfield), and Janet (Debbie Gardiner).*
*Credits:* Original screenplay, producer, and director: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Associate producer: Allison Louise Downe. Assistant director: Raymond Szegho (Ray Sager). Production manager: John Sezonov. Film editor: Alex Ameripoor. Assistant editor: Ray Sager. Cameraman: Eskandar Ameripoor. 2nd unit cameraman: Dan Krogh. Crew Chief: Scott Kranzberg. Sound recordist and set construction: Paul Dickinson. Songs: "Deep in the Spirit," "Love that White Lightnin'," "One More Swig of Moonshine": words & music: Sheldon Seymour (Herschell Gordon Lewis).
*Filmed in Oklahoma City and Chakota, Oklahoma.*

***Year of the Yahoo!***
(1972) Color. 35mm. 90 minutes. Released by International Arts Corporation
*Cast:* Hank Jackson (Claude King), Sid Angelo (Ray Sager), Tammy Parker (Ronna Riddle), Chet Stoner (Robert Jolly), Ed Varnett (Terrell Cass), Governor Baxter (Jeffrey Allen), Art Farnsworth (Tom Lytel), Carole (Leslie Slater), Senator Burwell (Robert Swain), Steve (Dan Krogh), and Jerry (Mark Schlopack).
*Credits:* Producer and director: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Original screenplay: Allen Kahn. Assistant director: Raymond Szegho (Ray Sager). Production manager: William Mays, Sr. Film editor: Eskandar Ameripoor. Crew Chief: Paul Dickinson. Assistant to the producer: Ruth Broyde. Continuity: Susan Kresge. Cinematographer: Alex Ameri (Eskandar Ameripoor). 1st unit cameraman: Daniel P. Krogh. 2nd unit cameraman: Paul Flaherty. Sound recordist: Spiro Horiatis. Still photographer: Mark Schlopack. Titles designer: Ray Craig. Original songs and music: Sheldon Seymour (Herschell Gordon Lewis).
*Filmed in and around San Antonio, Texas.*

**Black Love**
(1972) Color. 35mm. 75 minutes. A John Q. Black Production released by Lewis Motion Picture Enterprises.
*Cast:* No information available.
*Credits:* Producer and director: R.L. Smith (Herschell Gordon Lewis). Crew member: Ray Craig.
*Shot in Chicago, Illinois.*

**The Gore-Gore Girls**
(1972) color. 35mm. 90 minutes. Released by Lewis Motion Picture Enterprises.
*Cast:* Abraham Gentry (Frank Kress), Nancy Weston (Amy Farrell), Marlene (Hedda Lubin), Police Lieutenant (Russ Badger), Lola Prize (Nora Alexis), 1st policeman (Phil Laurensen), 2nd policeman (Frank Rice), Mary McIlhenny (Emily Mason), 1st Go-Go dancer (Corlee Bew), 2nd Go-Go dancer (Lena Bousman), 3rd Go-Go dancer (Marina Salli), 4th Go-Go dancer (Menda MacPhail), 5th Go-Go dancer (Luba Cherewchenko), 6th Go-Go dancer (Vicki Carr), 1st mobster (Frank Kawsh), 2nd mobster (John Sezonov), 3rd mobster (Alex Petrovic), Grout (Eskandar Ameripoor), Bartender (Ray Sager), Doctor (Jim Killen), Hippie (Alan J. Dachman), Master of ceremonies (Norman Dachman), Lady Wrestler (Lauren Obeda), Hysterical woman (Jeanne Molen), Cabdriver (Harry Dachman), and Marzdone Mobilie (Henny Youngman).
*Credits:* Producer and director: Herschell Gordon Lewis. Original screenplay: Alan J. Dachman. 2nd unit director: Ray Szegho (Ray Sager). Assistant director: Allison Louise Downe. Director of cinematography: Alex Ameri (Eskandar Ameripoor) Production manager: Ray Craig. Assistant production manager: R.A. Powell. Film editor: Eskandar Ameripoor. Assistant editor: Paul Dickinson. 2nd unit cameraman: Daniel P. Krogh. Sound recordist: Robert Lewis. Musical backgrounds: Sheldon Seymour (Herschell Gordon Lewis). Music coordinator: Larry Wellington. Continuity: Evelyn Chaitkin. Titles designer: Ron Muraoka. Titles photographer: Bill Garcia. Still photographer: Phillip Kimmell. Synchronization: Mahmoud Jalili. Special "gore" effects: Herschell Gordon Lewis, Allison Louise Downe, Robert Lewis, et al.
*Filmed in Chicago, Illinois.*

# APPENDIX I

# Availability of Lewis' films today

**35mm theatrical**

*Blood Feast, 2000 Maniacs, How to Make a Doll* and *Just for the Hell of It*

Epics International
Eric Caidin and Jimmy Lee Maslon
1706 North Las Palmas Avenue
Hollywood, California 90028
Phone: 213-465-8764

**16mm non-theatrical**

*2000 Maniacs*

Films Incorporated
733 Green Bay Road
Wilmette, Illinois 60091
Phone: 312-256-6600

**Videocassette**

*Blood Feast* and *2000 Maniacs*

Cult Video
8160 Amor Road
Los Angeles California 90046
Phone: 213-656-6702

*Color Me Blood Red* and *Something Weird*

Video Dimensions
110 E. 23rd Street,
Suite 603
New York, New York 10010
Phone: 212-533-5999

*The Wizard of Gore, The Gore-Gore Girls* and *The Gruesome Twosome*

Midnight Video
8750 Holloway Drive
Los Angeles, California 90069
Phone: 213-652-6552

**Regular 8mm documentary**

*An Homage to Herschell Gordon Lewis*

Daniel Krogh
4-F Films
2520 North Lincoln Avenue
Box 444
Chicago, Illinois 60614
Phone: 312-929-4194

The author invites any other distributors and/or copyright holders of Lewis' work to provide any information which can lead to an expansion of this listing in future editions. You may write to me in care of the publisher.

**Laugh? I thought they'd die!**

THE SCREWIEST, WILDEST, SEXIEST,

ONE YET!

# THE GORE GORE GIRLS

STARRING

★FRANK KRESS ★AMY FARRELL

★HEDDA LUBIN

SPECIAL GUEST STAR

★HENNY YOUNGMAN

IN STARTLING COLOR

PRODUCED & DIRECTED BY
HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS

Released By

LEWIS MOTION PICTURE ENTERPRISES

R

2 ***This Stuff'll Kill Ya!*** **(1971).**

3 ***2000 Maniacs*** **(1964).**

## Newspaper Readers Selected Title of Movie "Prime Time"

"Where do they ever get the titles for movies?" is a question frequently pondered by thousands of film fans. If a motion-picture is produced from a book, play, short-story or other published work, the title of the original writing is most often retained. Films based upon current or historical events generally pose no title problems.

Title troubles crop up when a producer is making a movie from an original screenplay. Such was the case with the new feature drama "The Prime Time" currently playing at the......................Theatre.

"We liked the original screenplay submitted by screenwriter Robert Abel, but his title was just not right for the story", stated Herschell G. Lewis, youthful producer of "The Prime Time".

"Accordingly, we set out to find another, more suitable title", continued Lewis. The entire staff of Essanjay Films, Inc. the distributors of the picture, was called upon to submit titles. Literally hundreds were written, discussed and finally rejected for one reason or another. Lewis mentioned his title plight to a Chicago newspaper columnist. The columnist offered to run a story asking the paper's readers to suggest titles, and Lewis agreed to reward the author of the best usable film title received with a $50.00 U. S. Savings Bond.

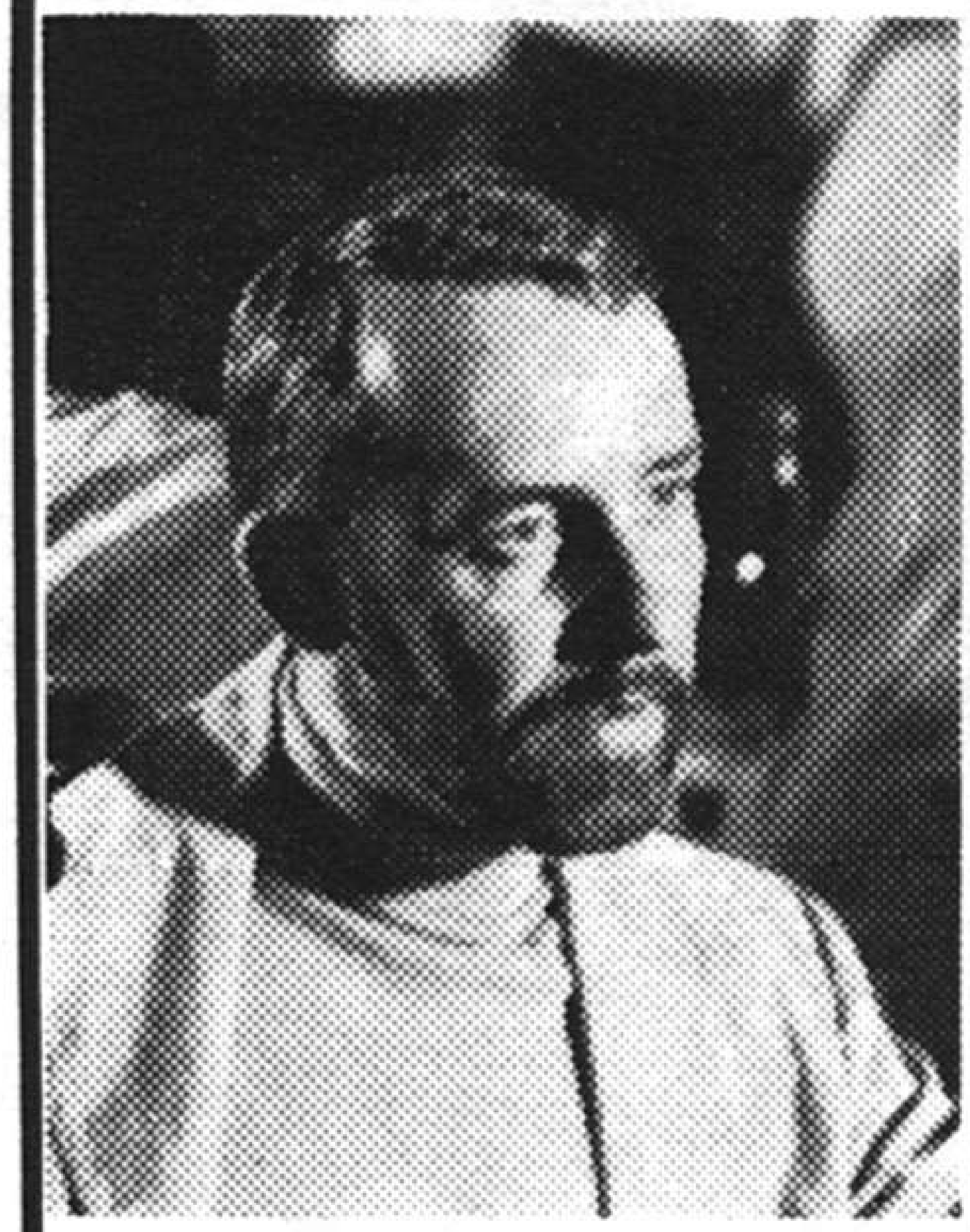
4,863 different titles were mailed to the newspaper. A committee of four persons worked almost a week before "The Prime Time" was selected as the winner, and the title of the film, a story about today's youth. "The title is based upon the concept of youth as the prime of life", explained producer Lewis.

The savings bond was awarded to twin brothers in Sarasota, Florida, Scott and Phill Hall, circus employees, who picked up a copy of the Chicago newspaper left on a bus seat by another reader.

*"Prime Time" Star*

**Pretty Maria Pavelle stars in "The Prime Time", exciting drama of young adults currently at the__________ Theatre.**

*Villain*



**Veteran character actor Ray Gronwold is seen as "The Beard", villainous 'beatnik' artist in "The Prime Time".**

### A LEWIS BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Books:**

*The American Film Institute Catalogue and Index of Feature Films, 1961-1970.*
Richard P. Krafsur, Executive Editor.
R.R. Bowker Company. A Xerox Education Company. New York and London. 1976.
(Cast, credits, plot synopses and other information on most of Lewis' films.)

*For One Week Only.*
Richard Meyers.
New Century Publishers. 1983.
(Discussion of Lewis' gore films.)

*The Golden Turkey Awards: The Worst Achievements in Hollywood History.*
Harry and Michael Medved.
Berkley Books. New York. 1981.
(Brief assessment of Lewis' career, concentrating on the gore films.)

*Kings of the Bs: An Anthology of Film History and Criticism.*
Edited by Todd McCarthy & Charles Flynn.
E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc. New York. 1975. (Lewis interview and somewhat inaccurate filmography.)

*Midnight Movies.*
J. Hoberman and Jonathan Rosenbaum.
Harper and Row. 1983.
(Appraisal of Lewis' work.)

*Splatter Movies: Breaking the Last Taboo.*
John McCarty.
FantaCo Enterprises Inc. Albany, New York. 1981. (Overview of the entire gore film genre with appraisal of Lewis' career and gore film filmography.)

*Shock Value.*
John Waters.
A Delta Book. Dell Publishing Company. New York. 1981. (Lewis interview.)

2

## ELEVEN HUNDRED CHICAGOANS WOULD BE FILM ACTORS

When Herschell G. Lewis, producer of "The Prime Time", suspensful drama of young adults, opening....................at the.................... Theatre began shooting the picture in Chicago, he decided to use local citizens in several of the minor roles.

Although the ten principal parts in the film's story were cast with professional stage and screen actors, there were 18 additional speaking parts to be filled. Lewis wanted to recruit these actors from the rosters of Chicago's hundreds of amateur and semi-professional theatre groups. He issued a casting call for the 18 needed performers. 1,103 persons answered the call . . . actors, models, students, and just plain folks who "wanted to be in a movie".

Lewis and his associates personally interviewed all 1,103. Each prospective thespian was given a short scene to read, and by the slow process of elimination the 18 parts were cast. Several of the rejected applicants were signed for other acting jobs in Chicago-made TV productions, when Mr. Lewis referred these actors to his friends engaged in this enterprise.

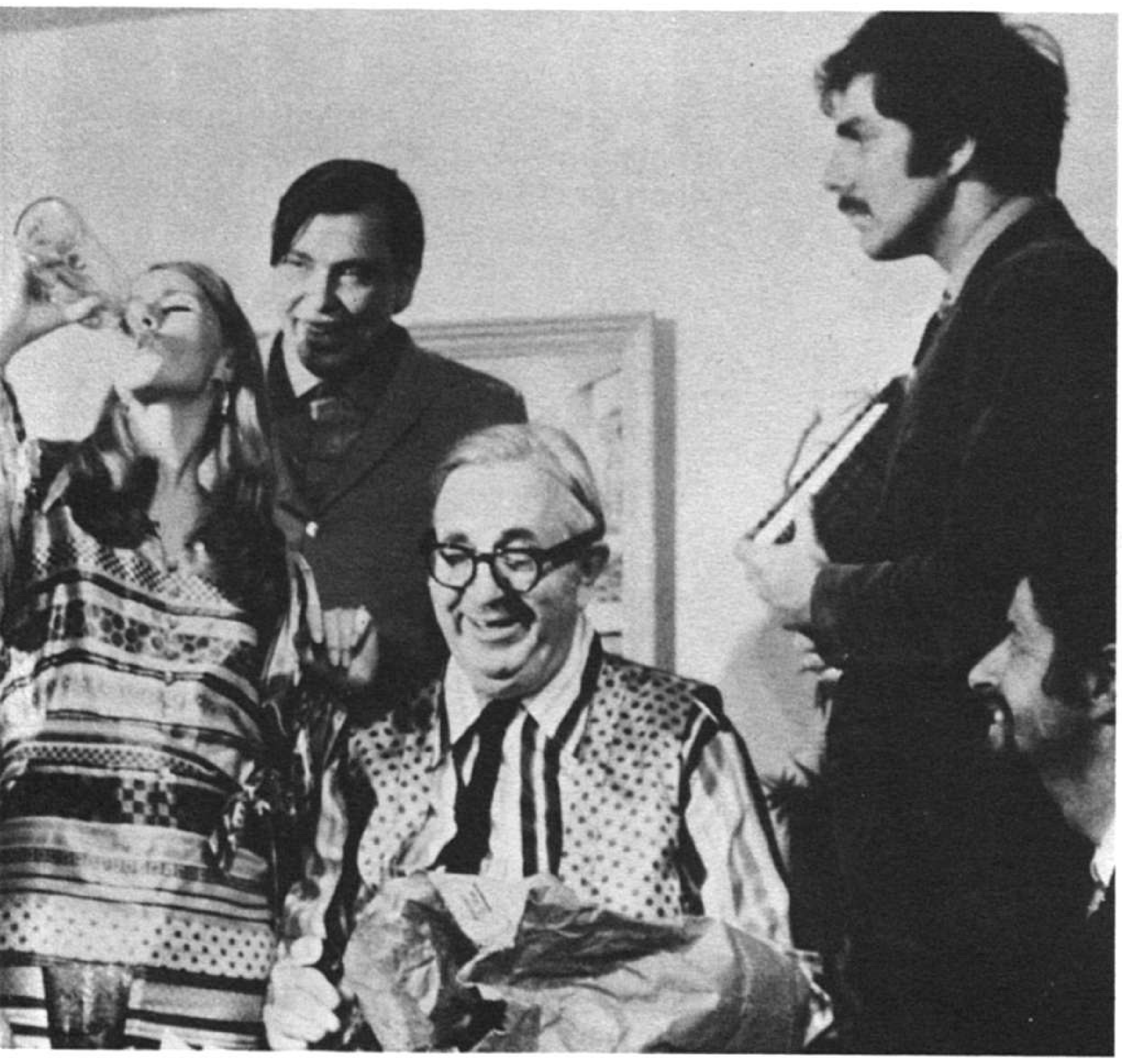
A COMPLETE SERIES OF NEWSPAPER MATS PREPARED FOR

ORDER MATS BY NUMBER

# SOMETHING WEIRD

RUNNING TIME: 83 MINUTES

3



**Magazines:**

*Filmfacts Magazine.*
New York. Volume VI, 1963, page 338–*Blood Feast*. Volume XI, 1968, Page 372–*Suburban Roulette*. Volume XIV, 1971, Page 754–*This Stuff'll Kill Ya!* Page 758, same volume–*Year of the Yahoo!* (Cast, credits, plot synopses.)

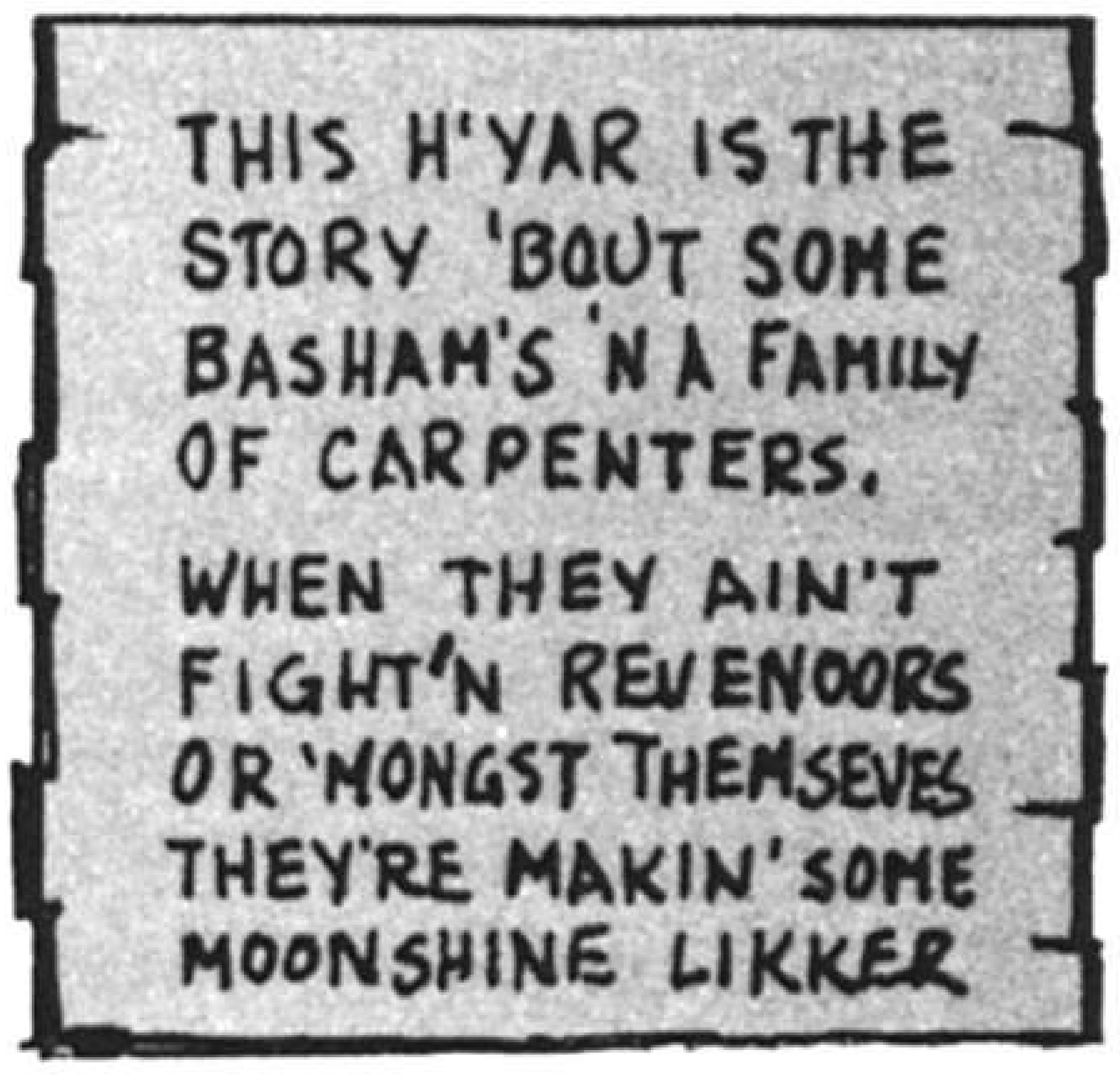
*Fangoria Magazine.*
New York. Issues #4 and #17.
(Lewis interviews by Randy Palmer and Bill Landis, respectively.)

# APPENDIX II

★ *Moonshine Mountain* ★
★ *Love That White Lightnin'* ★
★ *The Pill* ★
★ *Robert E. Lee Broke His Musket on His Knee* ★

# Selected Song Lyrics

Moonshine Mountain
in LIGHTNIN' BRIGHT Color


THIS H'YAR IS THE STORY 'BOUT SOME BASHAM'S 'N A FAMILY OF CARPENTERS.
WHEN THEY AIN'T FIGHT'N REVENOORS OR 'MONGST THEMSEVES THEY'RE MAKIN' SOME MOONSHINE LIKKER

**Moonshine Mountain**
*(The theme song from the motion picture of the same name. Words and music by Herschell Gordon Lewis, a.k.a. Sheldon Seymour.)*

O, way up there on Moonshine Mountain
That's where we make White Lightnin.'
Fourteen jugs without no countin'
That's how you take White Lightnin.'

Mix up corn with some old hog fat
That's how you can get White Lightnin.'
Add all the innards of an old polecat
That's what's in White Lightnin.'

*Chorus:*

White Lightnin.'
White Lightnin.'
It's a drink you can't sip thru a straw.
Aged one day then bottled in quarts.
That's why we choose White Lightnin.'
Good for chilblains, hives, and warts
That's how we use White Lightnin.'.

You make your mash and it starts to boil,
No trouble with White Lightnin.'
Works twice as good as castor oil,
See double with White Lightnin.'

*Repeat Chorus.*

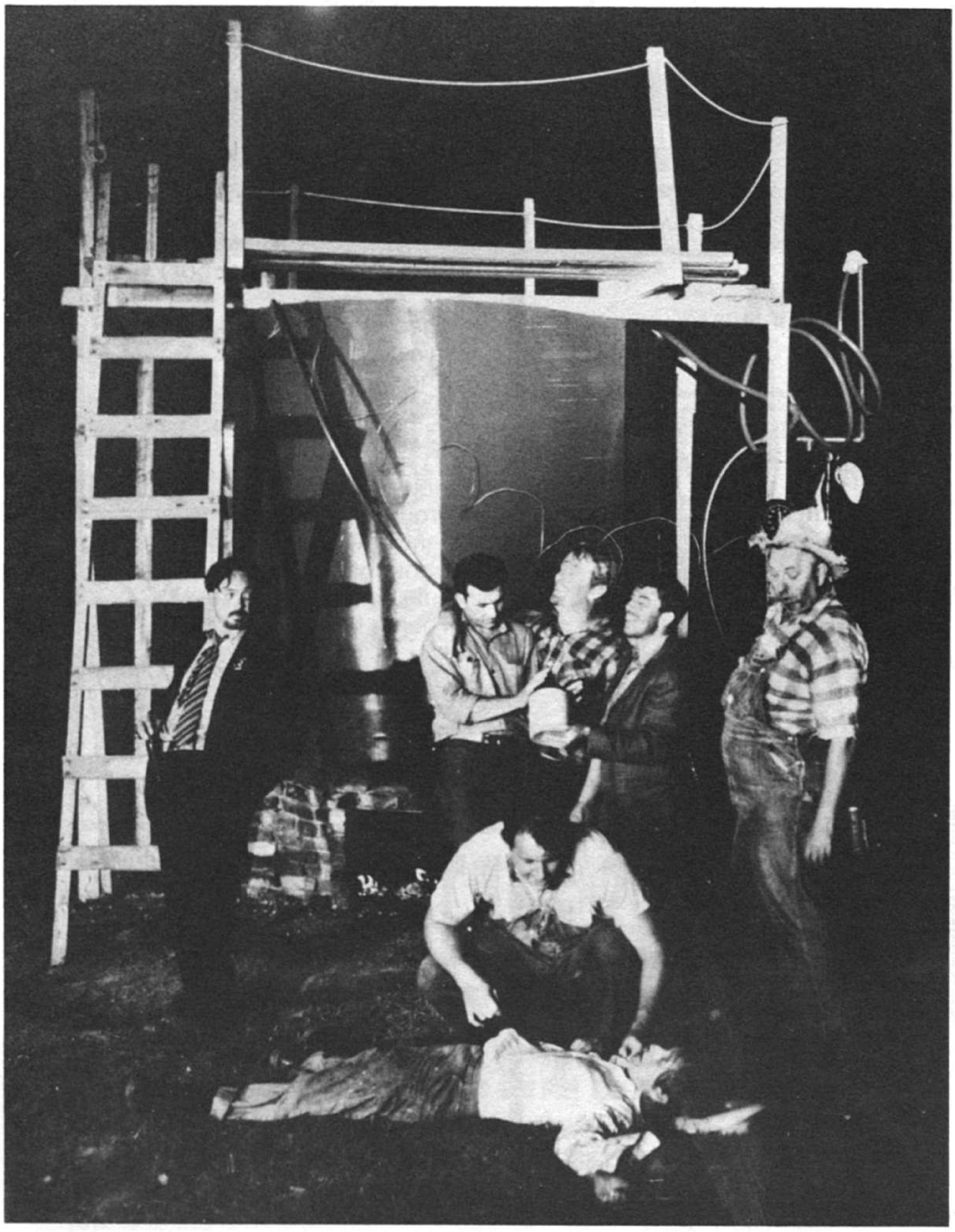
Good for cleanin' rifle bores,
Lead don't hurt White Lightnin.'
Good for oilin' outhouse doors,
Just a squirt of Lightnin.'

When Samson knocked down all them
walls,
He used a jug of Lightnin.'
Gabriel blew them trumpet calls,
After a slug of Lightnin.'

*Repeat Chorus.*

1

2



1, 2 ***Moonshine Mountain* (1964).**

**Love That White Lightnin'**
*(From the motion picture* Moonshine Mountain. *Words and music by Herschell Gordon Lewis, a.k.a. Sheldon Seymour.)*

Now, my pappy built a still
In a clearin' on the hill,
And he turned out forty gallons every day.
Folks from here to Istambul
Wound up drunker than a mule.
It was also used for gasoline in pappy's Chevrolet.

*Chorus:*

O, I love that White Lightnin', deed I do. (Deed I do.)
O, I love to swig that good ol' mountain brew. (Mountain brew.)
Cause one sip of country liquor
Will make you drunker quicker
And will keep you plastered for a month or two.

Sam, the sheriff, come along,
And he said, "Folks this is wrong."
"You can't build no still. You're breakin' up the law."
But we give him one small swig,
And he danced a lively jig,
And a cloud of smoke came streamin' from his ears and nose and jaw.

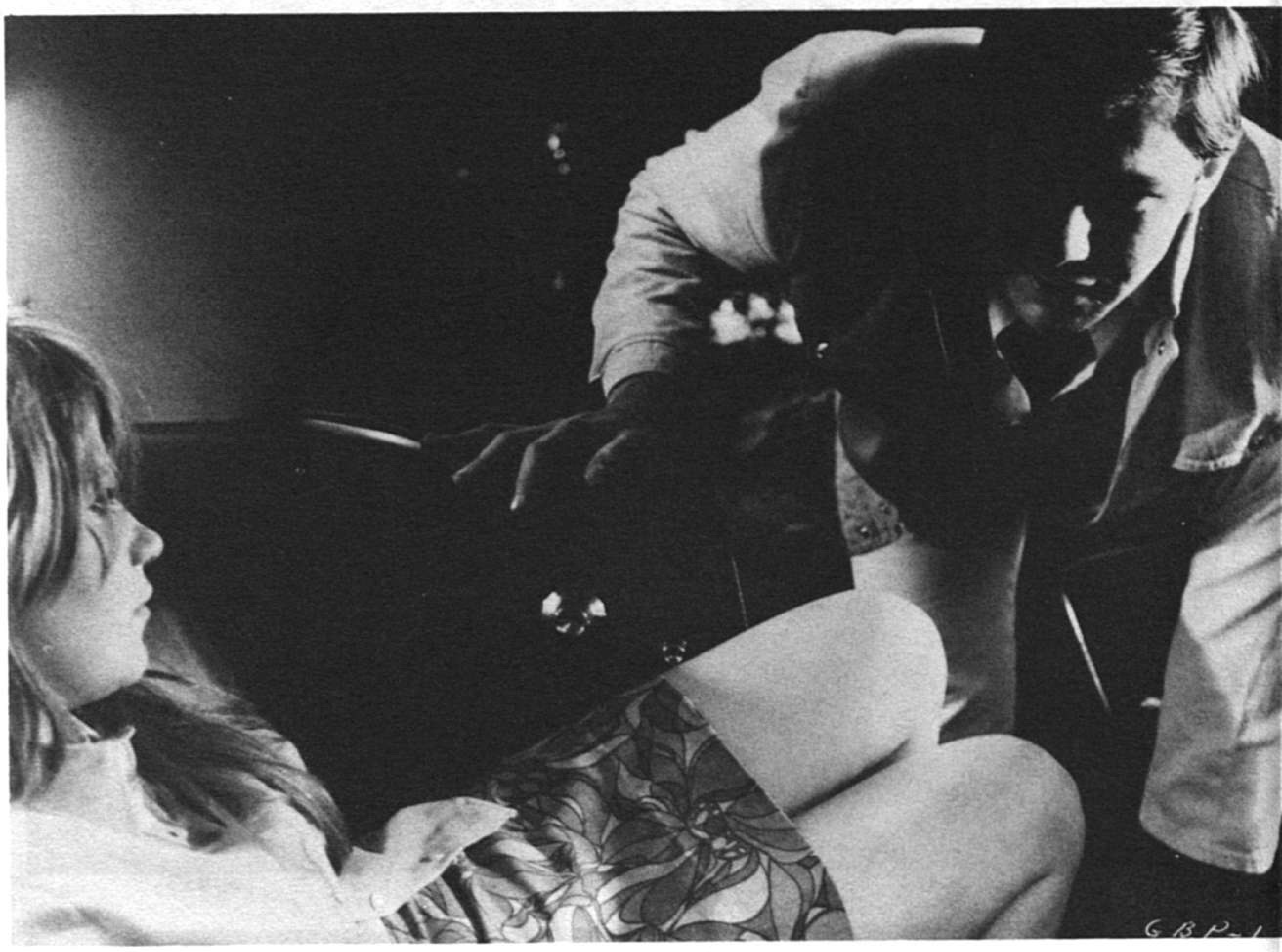
*Repeat Chorus.*

Grandpa didn't like that booze.
So he took off both his shoes,
And threw them socks and all into the mash.
Then my ma, she took a drink,
And then quicker than a wink,
She grew two more toes, turned purple, and she raised a red mustache.

*Repeat Chorus.*

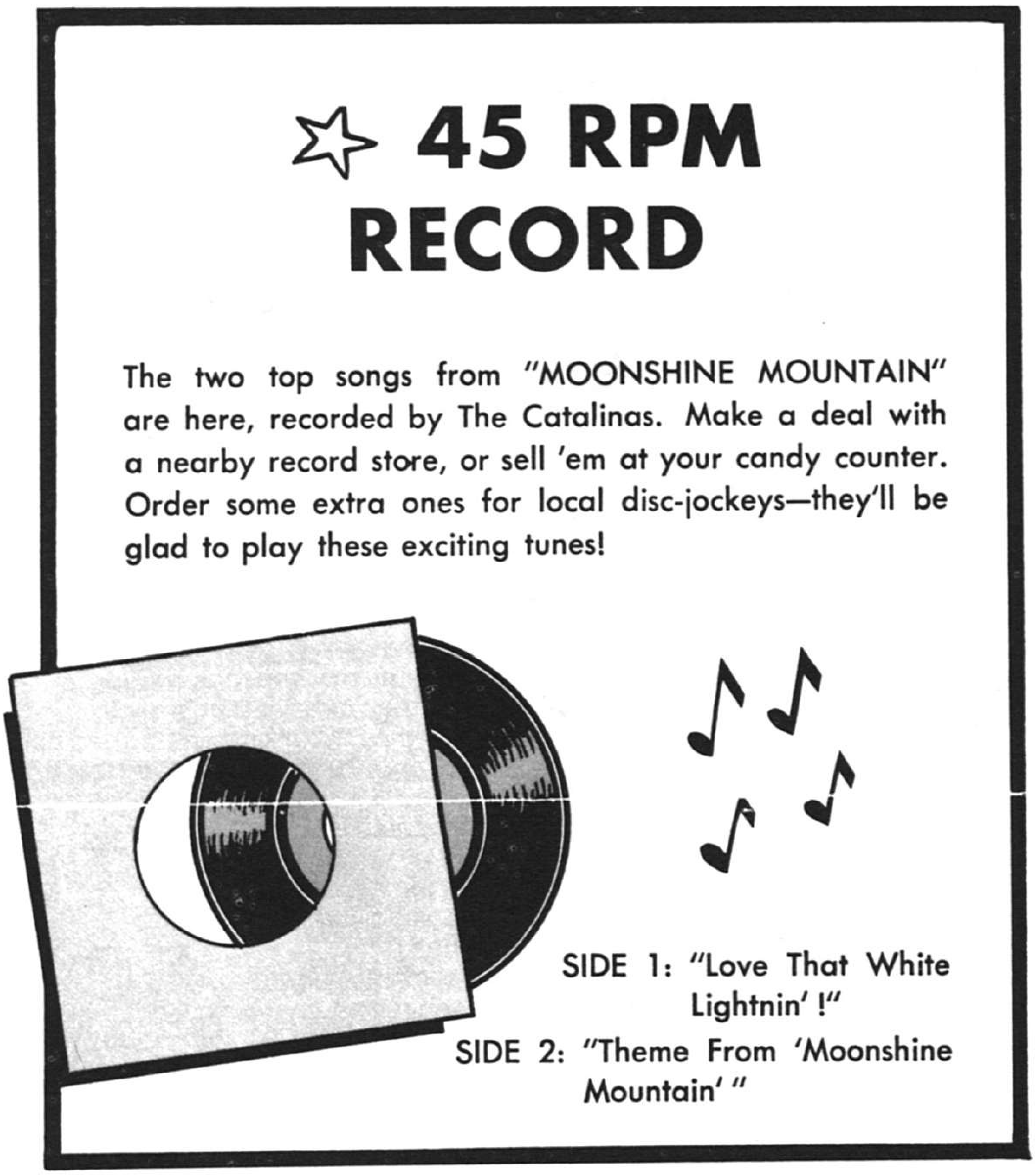
On the day my pappy died,
He was full of booze, inside.
When he said goodbye, his breath burned off my ear.
Then my pappy, he went south,
With a wick stuck in his mouth.
He was so full of White Lightnin' that he burned for about a year.

*Repeat Chorus.*



3 ***The Girl, The Body, and The Pill*** **(1967).**

3



# ☆ 45 RPM RECORD

The two top songs from "MOONSHINE MOUNTAIN" are here, recorded by The Catalinas. Make a deal with a nearby record store, or sell 'em at your candy counter. Order some extra ones for local disc-jockeys—they'll be glad to play these exciting tunes!

SIDE 1: "Love That White Lightnin' !"
SIDE 2: "Theme From 'Moonshine Mountain' "

**The Pill**
*(The theme song from the motion picture* The Girl, The Body, and the Pill. *Words and music by Herschell Gordon Lewis, a.k.a. Sheldon Seymour.)*

There's a little round pill
In a little round case,
And it's all the world to me.
Because without that little round pill,
I'd have a family.

Now you take that pill
From it's little round case.
Take one every day.
If you miss one pill,
Just one little pill,
There's the devil to pay.

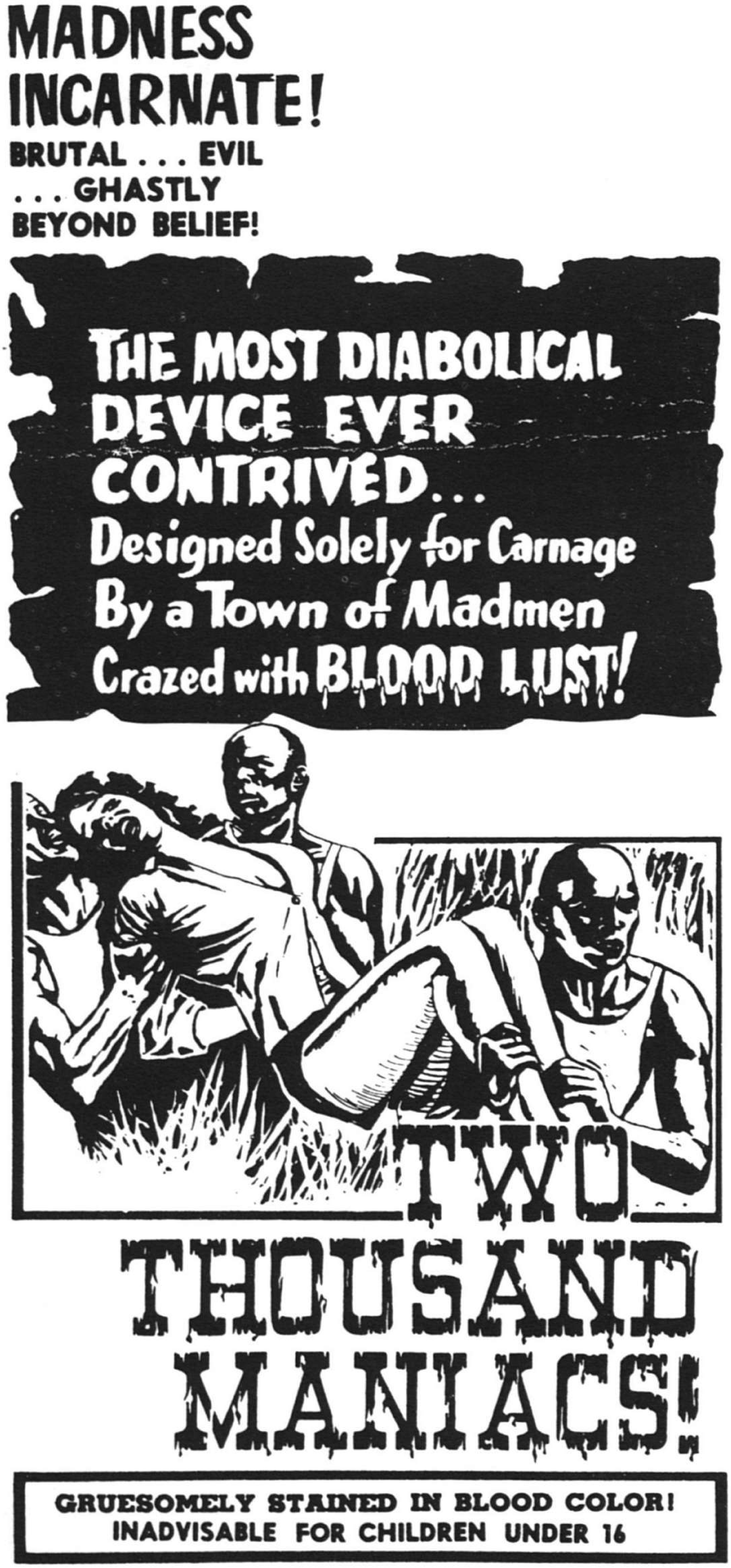
*(Sound effects of baby crying.)*

Be sure that gal
Takes that little round pill,
Or I'll tell you this, my laddie.
Instead of calling you loverboy,
They're gonna call you daddy.

*Choral Effect.*

Hail to thee o men of science.
We shall all be still.
Cause our women have reliance
On that friendly pill.

Little round pill,
In a little round case,
And it means so much to me.
Because without that little round pill,
I'd have a family.


MADNESS INCARNATE!
BRUTAL . . . EVIL
. . . GHASTLY
BEYOND BELIEF!
THE MOST DIABOLICAL DEVICE EVER CONTRIVED...
Designed Solely for Carnage
By a Town of Madmen
Crazed with BLOOD LUST!
TWO THOUSAND MANIACS!
GRUESOMELY STAINED IN BLOOD COLOR!
INADVISABLE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 16

**Robert E. Lee**
**Broke His Musket On His Knee**
*(The theme song from 2000 Maniacs. Words and music by Herschell Gordon Lewis.)*

There's a story you should know
From a hundred years ago,
And a hundred years we've waited now to tell.
Now the yankees come along,
And they'll listen to this song,
And they'll quake in fear to hear this rebel yell.

*(Repeat last line.)*

*Chorus:*

EEEEE, YA-HA,
O the South's gonna rise again!
EEEEE, YA-HA,
O the South's gonna rise again!

Robert E. Lee broke his musket on his knee
And a thousand pieces shattered on the ground,
But he looked up then, and he gathered up his men,
And from his lips there came an awful sound.

*(Repeat last line.)*

*Repeat Chorus.*

Stonewall took a gun,
And he made the yankees run;
But he took a fatal bullet in the chest.
As he fell down dead,
Old Stonewall said,
"I'm givin' you a dying man's request."

*(Repeat last line.)*

*Repeat Chorus.*

Captain Stuart spurred his horse,
And the yankees ran of course.
But there wasn't any powder for his gun.
So he said to his boys,
"Let's make a lot of noise,
And we'll charge again and make those yankees run."

*(Repeat last line.)*

*Repeat Chorus.*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all those people and organizations who helped me in the writing and production of this book.

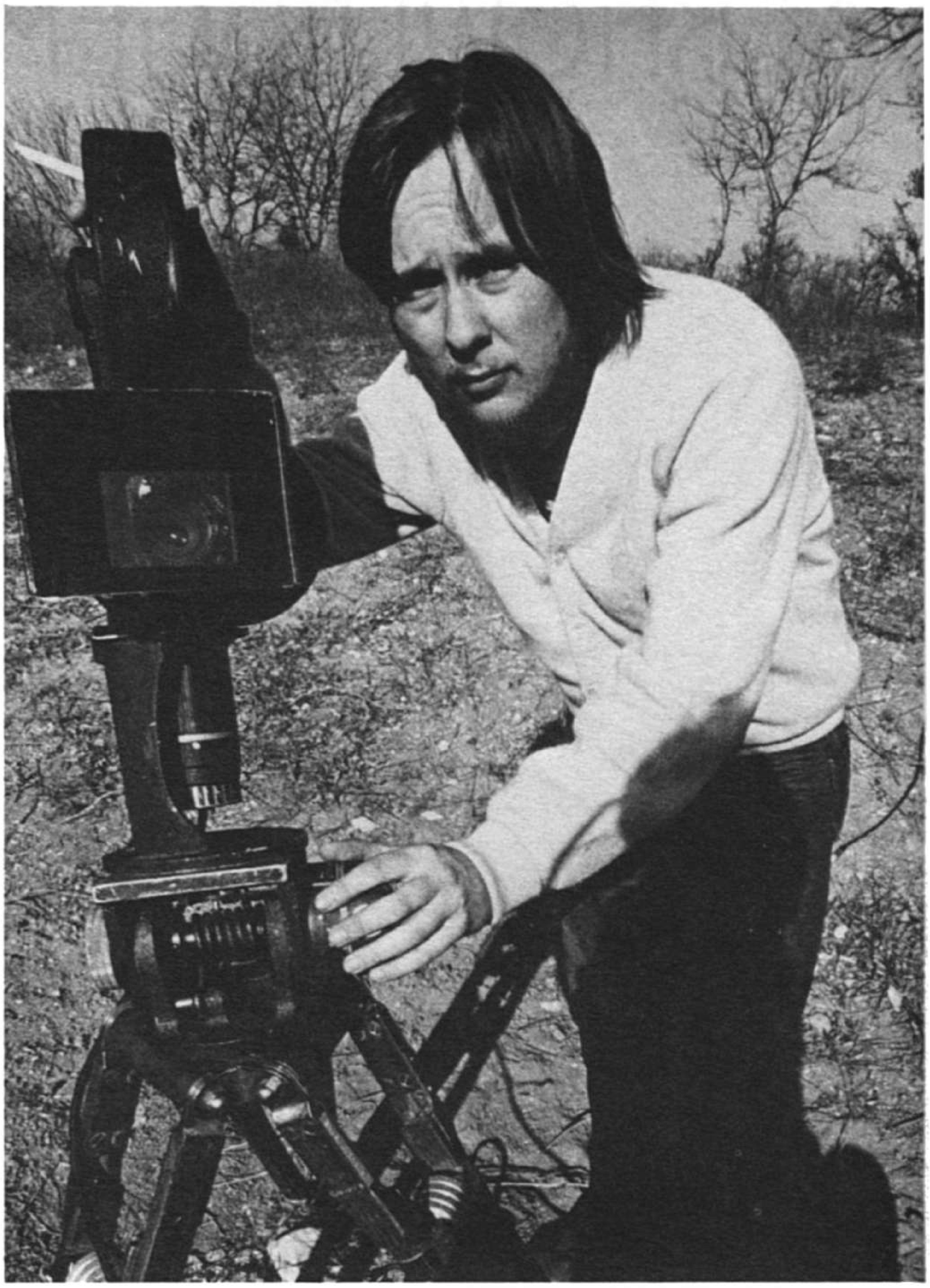
First and foremost, of course, is its subject, Mr. Herschell Gordon Lewis, who has been more than helpful, kind, and patient with me in this endeavor.

The others are, in alphabetical order: Alex Ameripoor, Eric Caidin, Ray Craig, Michael Flores, Gary V. Krogh, Jimmy Lee Maslin, John McCarty, Fred Ross, William Seaton, Tom Skulan, Pat Warren, The DeKalb Public Library, the Film Center of the Chicago Public Library, and the Northwestern University Library.

**Daniel Krogh**
**September, 1983**

*Photo credits: The author's private collection, Eric Caidin of Hollywood Book & Poster, Cult Video, and Herschell Gordon Lewis.*

# BIOGRAPHIES



1

**Daniel Krogh was first drawn to the horror film genre via the pages of Forrest J. Ackerman's *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine while in Junior High School.**

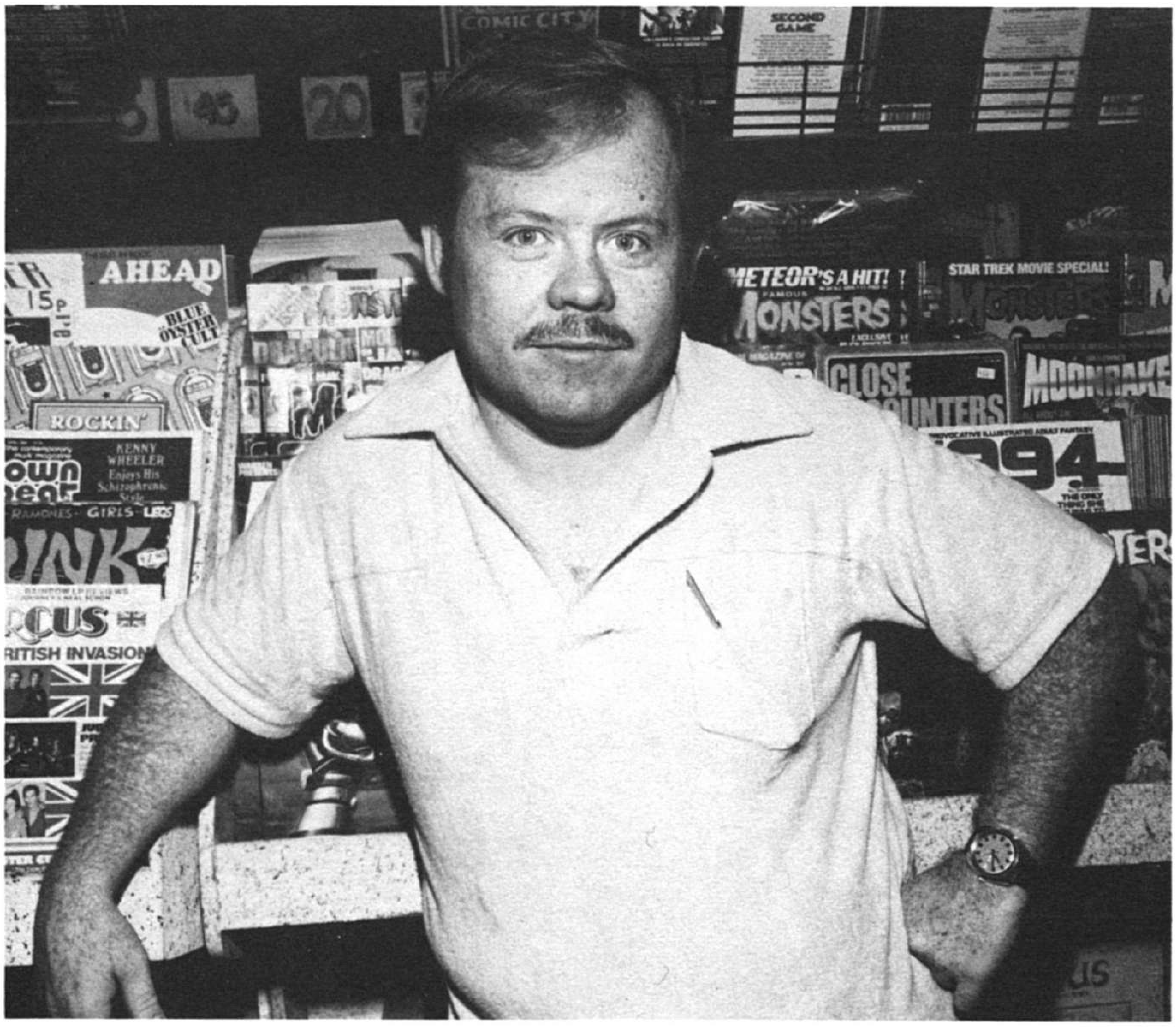
By the end of his freshman year in Senior High, he had produced, directed, photographed and edited his first film, *The House of the Ghoul*, employing his friends as actors and his family's Cine-Kodak Eight camera as the means of production. Perhaps it was this background in making bizarre films that fated him to work with Herschell Gordon Lewis, the Wizard of Gore.

Between 1968 and 1972, Krogh worked with Lewis on six features: *The Psychic, Linda and Abilene, The Wizard of Gore, This Stuff'll Kill Ya!, Year of the Yahoo!,* and *The Gore-Gore Girls*. Krogh has continued to produce his own works in 8mm, three of which—*Dive, Subway,* and *An Homage to Herschell Gordon Lewis*—have won awards at the Rochester, Ann Arbor, and Monterey Film Festivals.

*The Amazing Herschell Gordon Lewis* is his first book.

1 **Daniel Krogh on location in San Antonio, Texas, during the shooting of *Year of the Yahoo!***

2 **John McCarty.**



2

**John McCarty has been a fan of horror, science-fiction and fantasy films since the age of five. His private collection of genre and other type films numbers in the hundreds.**

A graduate of Boston University's film school, he has, over the years, contributed articles and reviews to film magazines as diverse as *Cinefantastique*, *Filmaker's Newsletter*, *Classic Images*, *Take One*, and *Today's Filmmaker*.

He is the author of three other books: *You're On Open Line: Inside the Wacky World of Late-Night Talk Radio*; the cult favorite, *Splatter Movies: Breaking the Last Taboo*, which *Fangoria* magazine has termed, ". . . the definitive history of the gore film, and likely to remain as such"; and *Video Screams*, the official source book for horror, science fiction, fantasy and related films on videocassette and disc.

$14.95
ISBN
0-938782-03-7

In 1963 he released an exploitation film so violent it caused mass panic among filmgoers and critics.

No in-depth information has previously been published on him.

He initiated the violent horror genre which is so popular today.

Many of the negatives and promotional materials for his films have been presumed lost since the early '70s.

Posters, still photographs and other memorabilia from his films are so rare that, when available, they sell for astronomical sums.

Today, most of his films are banned from television (even cable!).

He is the most violent, gruesome, disturbing filmmaker in motion picture history... he is

**THE AMAZING HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS**

Now, the whole story can be told...